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ABSTRACT

This book recounts the historical achievements of the National PTA and its sister organization, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. The PTA is the result of the hard work of such women as Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, founders of the original National Congress of Mothers, and Selma Sloan Butler, who, with the support of the National PTA, founded the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. When the two organizations merged in 1970, so did their identical mission to improve children's lives. The book profiles these women's work on such issues as juvenile justice, kindergarten classes, child labor laws, hot lunch programs, car safety, the Salk polio vaccine, today's National Education Goals, and the PTA Web site. The book includes: "The Historical Setting"; "The Founding"; "The Early Years, 1900-1909: Schooling Parents"; "1910-1919: For the Health and Safety of Children"; "1920-1929: Be It Resolved"; "1930-1939: The Voice of the PTA--90 Years in Print"; "1940-1949: PTA On the Air"; "1950-1959: Monitoring the Media and the Message"; "1960-1969: Bringing Justice to Juveniles"; "1970-1979: Advocates in Action"; "1980-1989: The Reflections Program"; and "1990-1997: Celebrating a Century of Commitment to Children." (SM)

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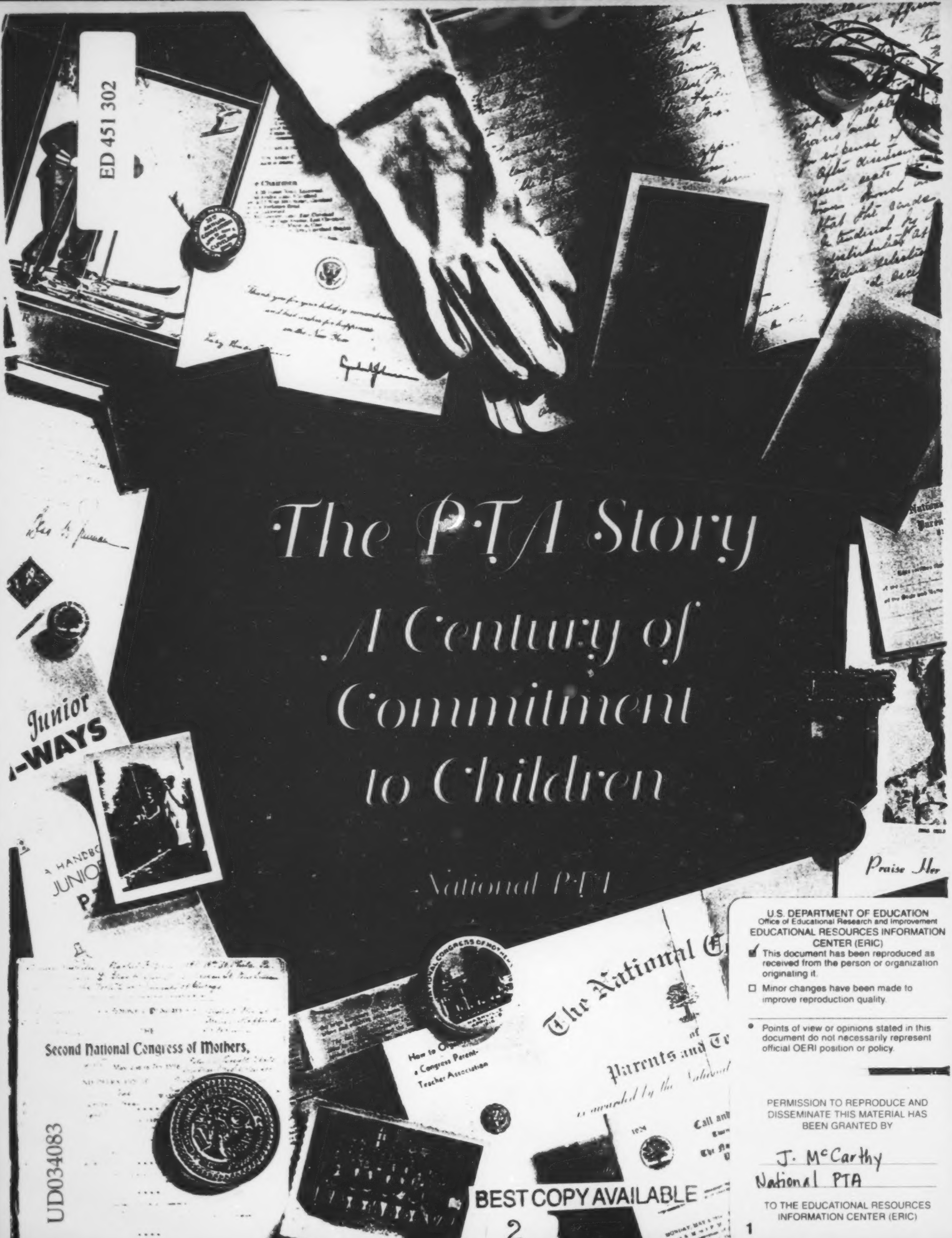
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The PTA Story

A Century of Commitment to Children

National PTA

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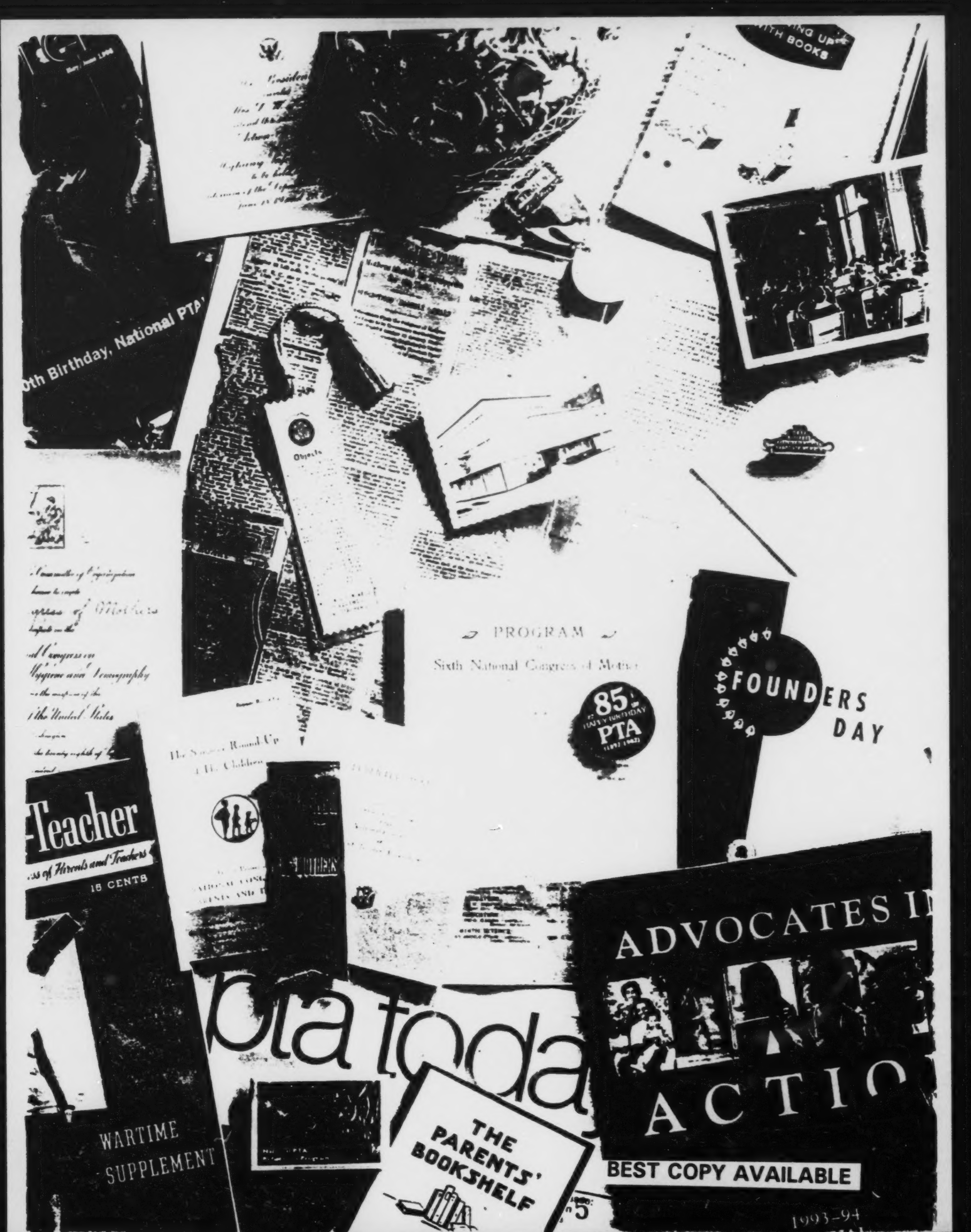
PTA By now, just the name itself has become so universal that virtually every adult American knows it. As with the greatest brand names, its familiarity bespeaks both its broad reach and its sterling reputation. The PTA idea has become woven into the basic fabric of our local communities, and as such has become a major thread in the broad weave of American life over this past century. Now in celebration of its 100th anniversary, the National PTA's history has been set down in *The PTA Story—A Century of Commitment to Children*. This recounting of its achievements reveals the National PTA along with its sister organization, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, as one of the most significant volunteer forces in this country's history.

That the PTA managed to achieve this prominence was no happy accident of chance. The organization came into being as a result of the hard work and far-reaching influence of some of the most accomplished women of the day. Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, the founders of the association originally christened the National Congress of Mothers, were women of high social prominence and significant means. They had no reason to believe they could not accomplish great things, and their ambitions for the new association were unbounded. Mrs. Birney made that clear when she wrote in 1898, "The National Congress

The PTA Story



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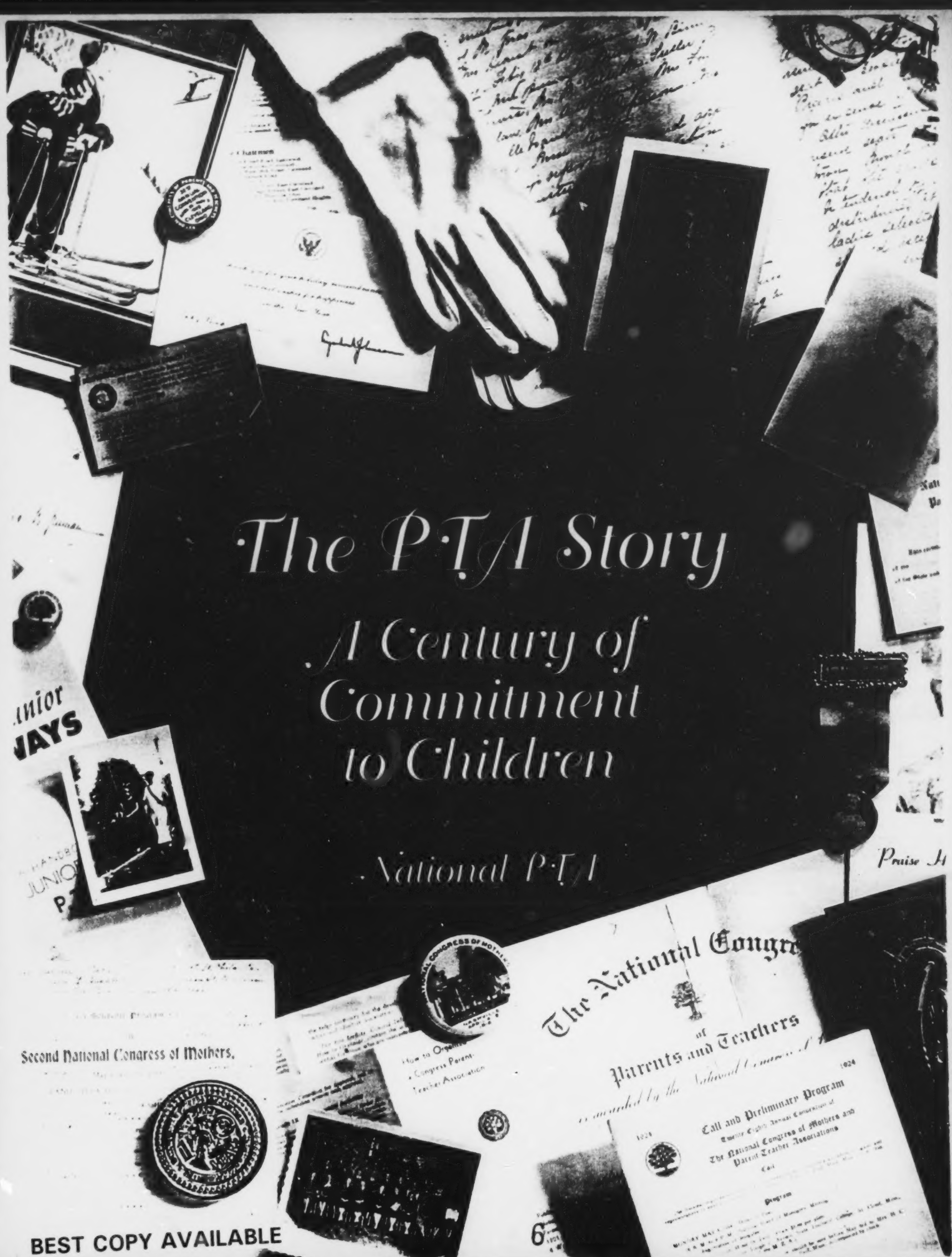
Junior
JAYS
HANDBOOK
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Second National Congress of Mothers.
How to Organize a Congress Parent-Teacher Association
National Congress of Mothers
The National Congress of Parents and Teachers
Call and Preliminary Program
The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations
Program
Praise

The PTA Story

A Century of Commitment to Children

National PTA

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Prologue

Alice McLellan White Birney dabbed her forehead. But it was more than the stuffy heat and humidity of Chautauqua, New York, that made the mid-summer of 1895 unbearable. She was homesick for her family. Her husband Theodore had gone on a fishing trip with his brothers. Her daughters were now in the care of their grandmother.

Although the 36-year-old Alice Birney was alone, her longing for her family was tempered by the knowledge that it had been her choice to take this summer journey by herself—a bold step for any woman in the 1890s. But taking bold steps was definitely not out of character for Mrs. Birney. For this avid reader and thoughtful intellectual, traveling to Chautauqua, the nation's first adult education center, was no lark. There in upstate New York she hoped to learn about how the Chautauqua experience functioned. The topic of study was the burgeoning Kindergarten movement for early childhood education, pioneered in the nation by Marguerite Schurz in her one-room school in central Wisconsin.

At Chautauqua, Mrs. Birney met others who shared her passion for ideas and the drive to put those ideas into action to help others. In her mind, no one needed help more than the children.

She came home from that summer experience brimming with an idea that was not only destined to improve the lives of millions of the nation's children, but also alter policies and the outlook of parents, the public, and the government.

Today Alice Birney's dream is still alive—a dream called the National PTA. Here is its story…of a century of commitment to children.

The Historical Setting

History books may have labeled the 1890s as "the gilded decade," but the gold veneer could not mask conditions that caused thoughtful mothers like Alice Birney great concern. For millions of children, formal education rarely went beyond the 5th grade. Prepubescent immigrant children often worked unthinkable hours in dimly lighted Dickensian hellholes. Mixing children and industrial machinery was a recipe for disaster. Their childhood and sometimes their limbs or very lives were held hostage to economic necessity. Those who benefited most from a booming economy saw nothing wrong with importing entire immigrant families—children and adults—to work in the factories that fueled the surging U.S. economy. While child labor declined steadily throughout the 19th century, for too many families, educating their children was not an option. Survival depended upon keeping their children out of school so they, too, could work and help make ends meet.

Child labor was not the only problem of these harsher times. Millions of children died from complications of childhood diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and rheumatic fever. And all too often, children had little recreation and nowhere to play. In this void, many youths strayed into delinquency only to be labeled incorrigible and ground up by a judicial system more concerned with punishment than with rehabilitation, ignoring the potential within children.

Opposite page: Alice McLellan White Birney

In the hopes of finding a way to save the children of the land, Alice Birney kindled her idea by sharing it with others. Then through the arrangement of an acquaintance, she was able to meet with the wealthy social activist Phoebe Apperson Hearst and describe her idea. Mrs. Hearst embraced the concept. She immediately began helping Mrs. Birney sound the call to unite mothers—and fathers, upon Mrs. Hearst's insistence—together in causes for the good of their children. Their idea became a reality called the National Congress of Mothers—known officially today as the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, unofficially as the National PTA.

The 1890s

U.S. presidents: Grover Cleveland, William McKinley

Headlines: Restrictive anti-black "Jim Crow" laws enacted across the South; Economic recession; Gold discovered in Canada's Klondike, triggering a gold rush; U.S. annexes Hawaiian Islands; Spanish-American War; Library of Congress opens its doors; Nobel Prizes created; Marie and Pierre Curie discover radium; First modern Olympics held in Athens; Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee

Daily life: Henry Ford builds his first car.; 3% of Americans age 18–21 attend college; U.S. population: 63 million; Average income: $411; Average public school teacher's income: $298; Average home: $825; Loaf of bread: 5¢; Woman's bicycle skirt: $2.50; Refrigerator: $11.47

Books: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, The Jungle Book, Alice in Wonderland, Cyrano de Bergerac

Art & music: Stars and Stripes Forever; Dvorak's New World Symphony; I Pagliacci; Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker ballet and Swan Lake

What's new? Dry cells, travelers checks, Jell-O, Campbell's Condensed Soup, Grape Nuts, Lifebouy Soap, Hershey Bars, Juicy Fruit gum, Cracker Jack, Tootsie Rolls, glass milk bottles, S&H Green Stamps

The founders

Alice McLellan was born on October 19, 1858, in Marietta, Georgia. A child of the genteel Old South, she was raised in a family where books were treasured and reading encouraged. After the Civil War, she attended private schools, eventually studying at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts.

Alice McLellan White Birney, cofounder and president of the National Congress of Mothers, 1897–1902

Although raised in a supportive, comfortable family, Alice knew firsthand of adversity. At the age of 18 she married Alonzo J. White, a Charleston, South Carolina, attorney. She was just 19 and expecting a baby when her husband died. When her daughter was born, the young widow named the child Alonsita after her husband. With the help of her mother, Harriet A. McLellan, Alice raised Alonsita in a warm and loving household, where reading continued to be at the center of activities.

The residence of Alice McLellan White in Marietta, Georgia, from 1872 – 1884. The home was purchased in 1887 by St. James Episcopal Church for use as a rectory.

Financial reality made it necessary for Alice to go to work to provide for her family. Never shy, she ignored the taboos of her age and pursued a career in advertising—excelling at her adopted profession.

Eventually, due to her high professional visibility, the young widow met Theodore Weld Birney, a Washington lawyer and the grandson of a famous abolitionist, whom she married in 1891, at the age of 33. The couple took up residence in Washington, DC.

Her second daughter, Catherine, was born in 1894. Within the next year, she discovered that she was pregnant again. The birth of her third child, Lillian, in 1895, was the catalyst that drove Alice Birney to redirect her life's work toward what would become her charismatic drive to benefit all the nation's children.

Mrs. Birney was deeply moved by the miserable condition of children and families so unlike her own affluent, happy, and loving circle that she became dedicated to helping others move towards that happiness. She wrote,

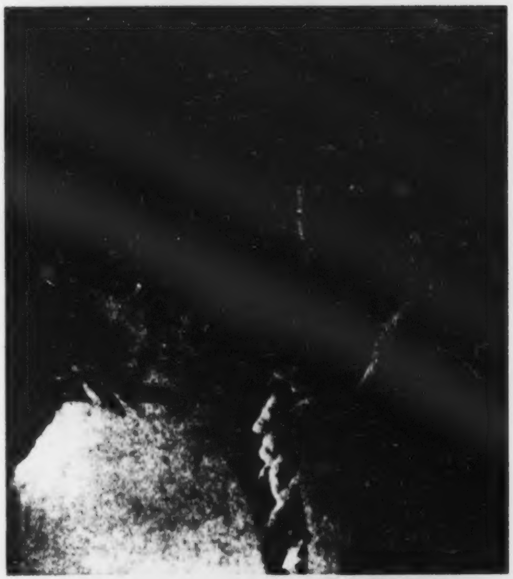
> I do not believe that happiness is calculated to make us selfish. On the contrary, the highest happiness develops sympathy for those less blessed than ourselves…It was my perfect home life and the influence of my two little ones that gave me the idea of a Mothers' Congress that might help to raise motherhood to a plane which, alas, so few of us realize.

Alice Birney knew that the way to gain nationwide attention to the needs of children demanded more than the enthusiastic support of her husband, her mother, and her family. She needed contacts and access to resources. Fortunately for her—and for generations of children—living in Washington, DC, would open to her a world of help, primarily because it was in Washington that she met Phoebe Apperson Hearst.

Phoebe Hearst was born on the family farm in Franklin County, Missouri, in 1842. She, too, was nurtured in a happy, supportive family life anchored by financial security. She became a schoolteacher at age 16 and, like Alice Birney, was consumed with the love of books and learning.

Phoebe longed to travel and see much more of the world. When neighbor George Hearst returned to his home in Missouri, Phoebe was captivated by his stories of San Francisco and the gold fields of California, such as the Comstock Lode where he had amassed a monumental fortune. Later he expanded to mines that would thrive in Utah, Montana, and the Dakota Territories. His Homestake Mine in Lead, South Dakota, would become the nation's largest producer of gold.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst, cofounder and vice president of the National Congress of Mothers



Top: A young Alice McLellan White with her eldest daughter, Alonsita, named for Alice's late husband Alonzo J. White. Alice was only 19 years old and married less than two years when she was widowed.

Bottom: Alice McLellan Birney's three daughters (from left), Catherine, Alonsita, and Lillian, were the inspiration for her work on behalf of this country's children.

Pictured here is Phoebe Apperson Hearst with her daughter-in-law Millicent Willson Hearst, and Phoebe's grandsons (left to right) George, born in 1904, John Randolph, born in 1909, and William Randolph Jr., born in 1908. In 1915, twin boys, Elbert Willson and Randolph Apperson, were born to William Randolph Sr., and Millicent. After her husband George's death in 1891, Phoebe spent much of her time at her hacienda in California where she lavished her attentions on her beloved grandsons.

Even though George was 21 years older than Phoebe, she accepted his proposal of marriage and returned to California with him, where in the first year she gave birth to their only child—William Randolph Hearst.

George went on to become a United States senator from California, William Randolph built a journalism empire, and Phoebe, engaging in philanthropic pursuits, became a "one-woman Community Chest."

Throughout her married life, Phoebe devoted herself to bettering conditions for children throughout the nation and the world. One of her abiding interests was the fledgling Kindergarten movement in the United States. She helped establish kindergartens wherever she went, including in Washington, DC, her new home as the wife of a U.S. senator.

Life in Washington, DC, brought Phoebe into an arena made for her boundless energy. Her wide network of influential people and philanthropic desires were a perfect match for the drive and zeal of Alice Birney.

These two remarkable women met in 1895. They would discover that they had many things in common: Both had been widowed—Mrs. Hearst having lost the Senator to cancer four years earlier—and they were both intellectuals who shared a love of books, a belief in the power of education, and an undying desire to provide for all children the best that life had to offer. Later, Mrs. Birney would write the following to her sister about Mrs. Hearst:

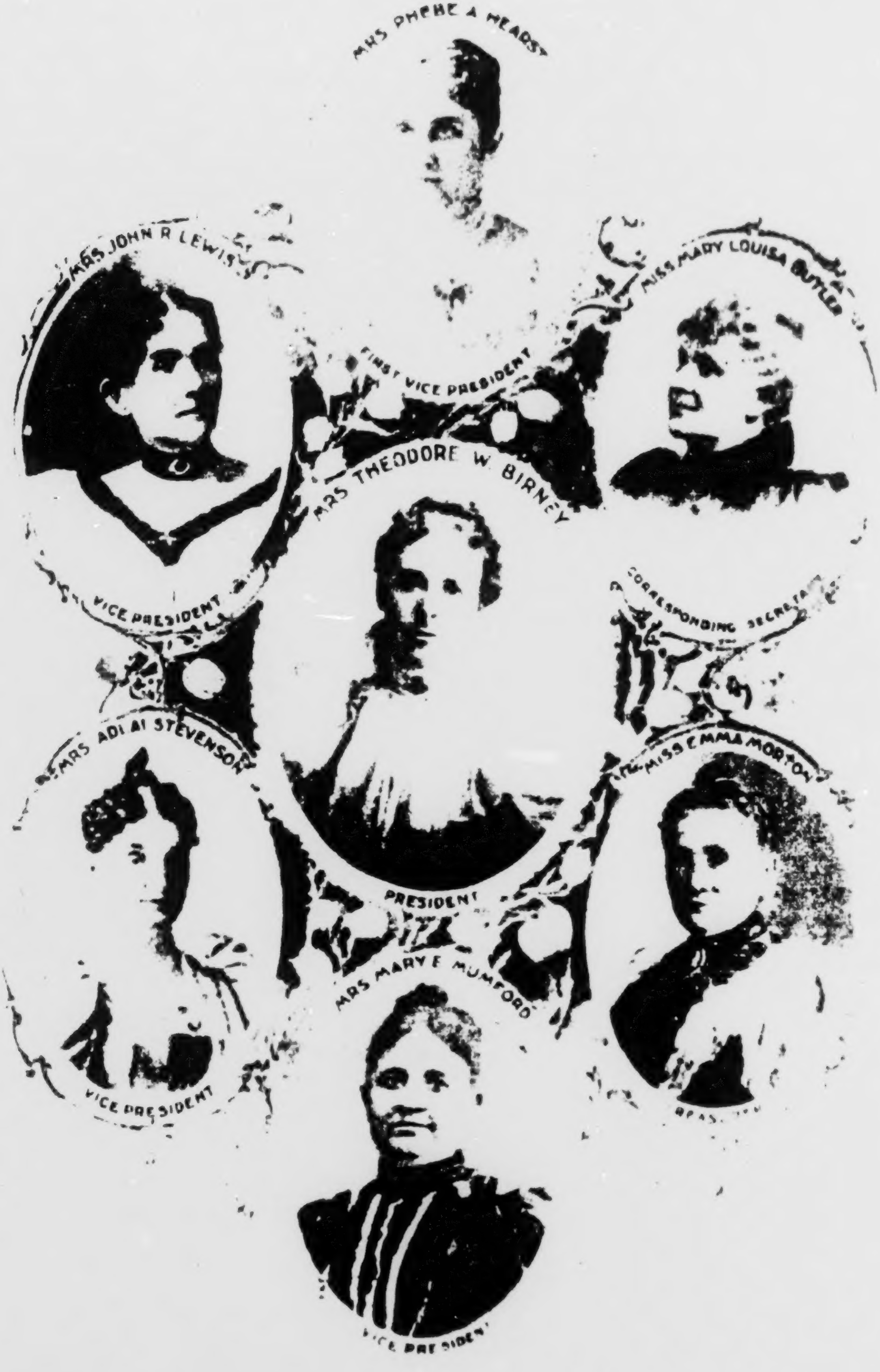
> I wish you knew Mrs. Hearst or could see her, if only once. It is she…who has indeed been the inspiration and stay of this movement from the first moment the idea was presented to her.
>
> I am confident she is doing more good in the world today than any other individual. She sustains, I think, 18 free kindergartens, besides contributing largely to the support of many educational and charitable institutions throughout the country.
>
> She is a liberal patroness of the arts and sciences, and makes valuable investigations possible on the part of those who might otherwise be hampered in their pursuit. She educates many girls, provides several thousand factory hands with nourishing lunches each day, and does so many other gracious and beautiful things that I cannot begin to enumerate them.
>
> In addition to this overwhelming amount of work in behalf of humanity, Mrs. Hearst superintends the management of her vast business interest, and it is a constant

> marvel to those who come in contact with her how she can accomplish so much. With all this pressure upon her, she is yet so ideally gentle and womanly that she wins all hearts and holds them too. If the other men and women who have the power would do one-tenth the good which Mrs. Hearst is doing, the world, I am sure, would be quickly regenerated.
>
> Knowing all this, you cannot wonder that I rejoice that she stands before the world as godmother for this plan for a national congress of mothers.

Once united in their cause, Alice and Phoebe would create an unprecedented movement, one that would address the needs of the children of an anxious nation.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst was one of the first active supporters of the idea of a National Congress of Mothers. She was the wife of George Hearst, a senator from California, and mother of William Randolph Hearst, who became the owner of a publishing empire.

Phoebe and her son, William Randolph, are pictured here with two of his sons, George and John Randolph.


MRS PHEBE A HEARST
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
MRS JOHN R LEWIS
VICE PRESIDENT
MISS MARY LOUISA BUTLER
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
MRS THEODORE W. BIRNEY
PRESIDENT
MRS ADLAI STEVENSON
VICE PRESIDENT
MISS EMMA MORTON
TREASURER
MRS MARY E MUMFORD
VICE PRESIDENT

The Founding

It was 1895 when Alice McLellan Birney first crystallized her idea for a gathering of mothers from around the land to carry out a dream. Some years later, she wrote about these days:

> At the time of the birth of my last little daughter…[an] idea…came to me. We had been living in Washington not quite two years, and I was impressed…with the great number of conventions and assemblages of all kinds and for all purposes held at the nation's capital. Filled as my mind was with the great mystery of birth, the solemn responsibility of parenthood, and the utter helplessness of the little being at my side, I built in my imagination a new world, such as it seemed to me might be a reality if each newborn soul might enter into life in a happy, uplifting environment.
>
> There was no novelty in such an idea. Hundreds have held it besides myself. I asked myself… "How can the mothers be educated and the nation made to recognize the supreme importance of the child?"
>
> Congress was in session…and then like a flash came the thought: Why not have a National Congress of Mothers, whose growth would quickly become international? It seemed the full answer to all my perplexed questioning.

Opposite page: Taken from a newspaper clipping, this montage shows the original officers of the National Congress of Mothers in 1897.

Members of the first board of managers of the National Congress of Mothers on the steps of the Birney home in Washington, DC. Alice McLellan Birney can be seen in the center, fourth from the left.

But Alice Birney could not have made her dream into a reality without the substantial assistance and financial backing of Phoebe Apperson Hearst.

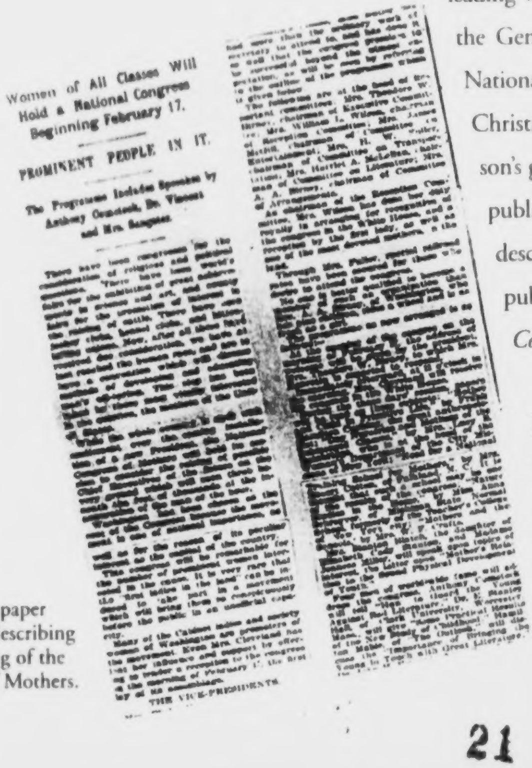
Phoebe Hearst opened doors in Washington that enabled Alice Birney to meet scores of like-thinking women—and talk her way into their hearts. She even spoke to the first lady, Mrs. Grover Cleveland, who introduced Mrs. Birney to wives of Cabinet members.

The National Congress of Mothers was actually organized in Phoebe Hearst's Washington home. Mrs. Hearst provided envelopes, stationery, and use of her personal secretary to the first officers. Alice Birney was elected president and Phoebe Hearst, first vice president. The second vice president was Mrs. Adlai E. Stevenson, wife of the vice president of the United States.

Together, these women and a handful of other original organizers made plans for turning Alice Birney's vision of a nationwide meeting into reality. They set a date—February 17, 1897—for the first *convocation*, as the first meeting was called.

To enlist support for the event, Alice Birney and the organizers wrote letters to prominent men and women around Washington and the country. At her invitation and expense, Phoebe Hearst obtained noted lecturers. A White House reception hosted by Mrs. Cleveland was arranged and the Arlington Hotel in Washington was secured for the three-day event.

Thousands of circulars announcing the convocation, program, and speakers were sent out to all leading women's groups and societies in the nation including the General Federation of Women's Clubs of America, the National Council of Women, and the National Women's Christian Temperance Union. Phoebe Hearst, utilizing her son's growing influence in journalism, obtained widespread publicity for the event. Advance notices and articles describing the convocation's program and purpose were published in *The Kindergarten Magazine, the Atlanta Constitution*, and the *Washington Evening Star.*



Women of All Classes Will Hold a National Congress Beginning February 17.

PROMINENT PEOPLE IN IT.

The Programme Includes Speeches by Anthony Comstock, Dr. Vincent and Mrs. Sangster.

An unidentified newspaper clipping from 1897 describing the upcoming meeting of the National Congress of Mothers.

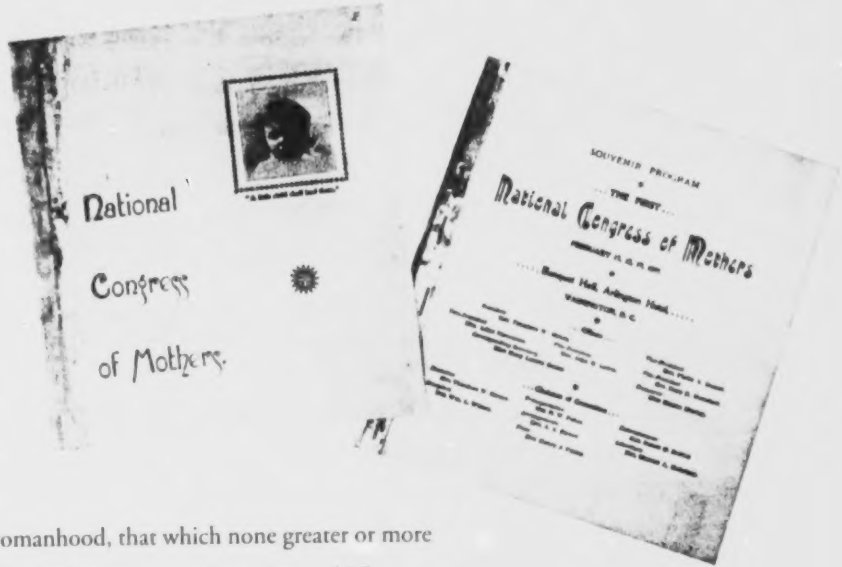
The first convocation

When the organizers chose the Arlington Hotel as the site for the three-day meeting, some members expressed quiet concern that the banquet hall was too large. If only a handful of people showed up, disinterest might doom the association. Even

Mrs. Birney was anxious. But she tried to buoy up the rest of the committee. "If only 50 mothers come," she told her sister-in-law, "I shall be satisfied. Yes, even if only 25 are there."

But February 17, 1897, turned out to be anything but a disappointment for Alice Birney and Phoebe Hearst. The idea they sowed had fallen on fertile ground.

According to contemporary reports, more than 2,000 people attended the first convocation of the National Congress of Mothers. It was standing-room-only for those trying to make their way into the Arlington Hotel ballroom. Even if they could not hear, this eager audience wanted to stay. At the time, the press deemed this first meeting "a significant event in the history of American womanhood, that which none greater or more illustrious of like purpose has ever been held in the United States, or perhaps the world."

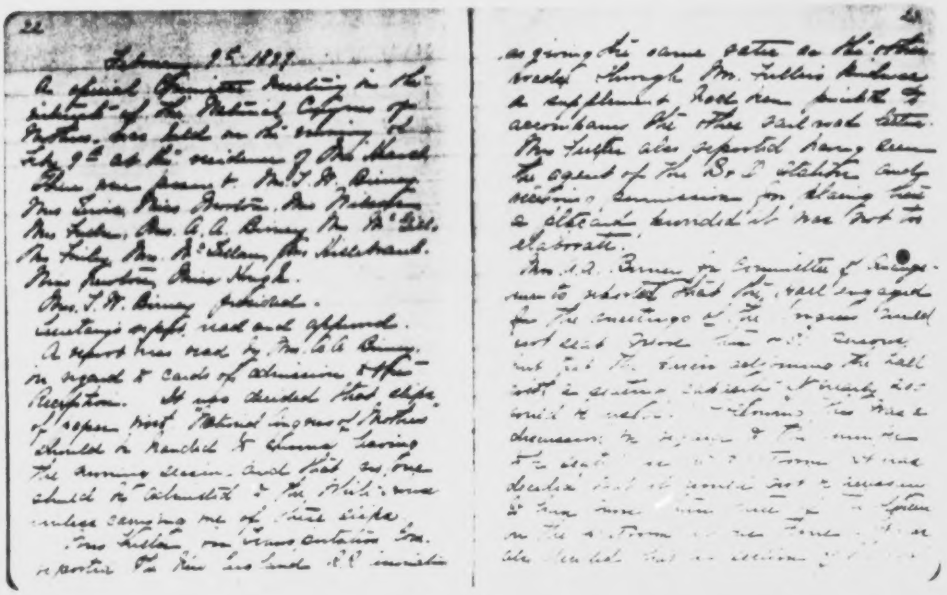


The cover of the first convention program pictured the photo of a child along with the saying, "A little child shall lead them."

Because of the overwhelming response, subsequent meetings of that first congress were held at the larger First Baptist Church of Washington, DC. Even there it was crowded. For want of a seat, members of the press sat on the edge of the baptistery. Finally, to handle the numbers, the last meeting was moved to the even larger Central Market Armory.

The convocation featured seminars and speeches, conferences, and panel discussions. Guest speakers made presentations on how children are raised in primitive tribes, the importance of mothers learning how to read, the effectiveness of the increasingly popular Kindergarten movement, and the establishment of day-care centers for working mothers of urban areas.

A platform and "Declaration of Principles of the National Congress of Mothers" was adopted.



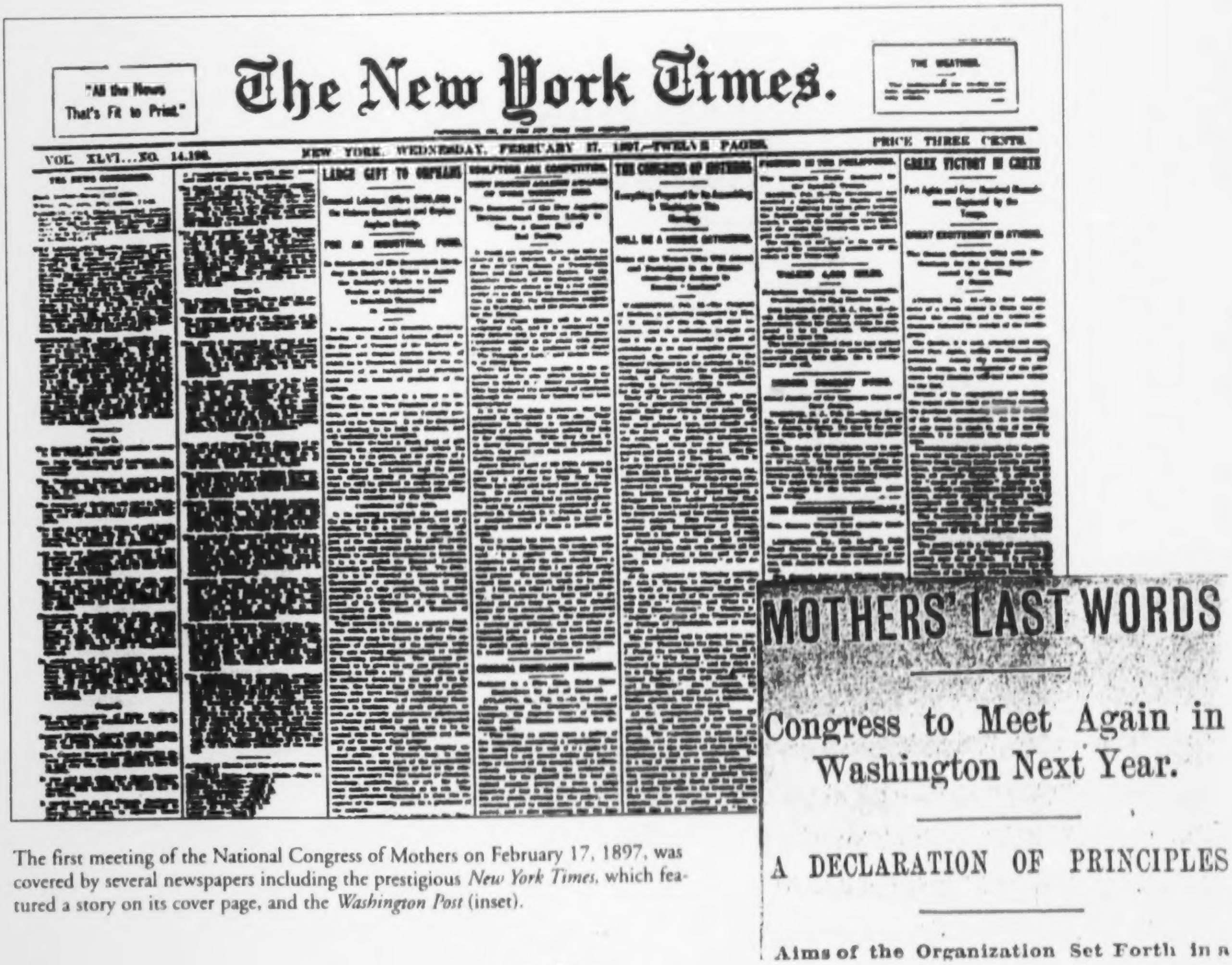
The actual notebook containing the handwritten minutes of the board's meetings leading up to the first convocation. A special meeting was held on February 9th, eight days in advance of the event, to discuss how "cards of admission" to the White House reception would be dispersed to delegates.

Alice Birney condensed them into the following wording, fit for a late 20th century mission statement:

> The National Congress of Mothers, irrespective of creed, color, or condition, stands for all parenthood, childhood, homehood. Its platform is the universe, its organization, the human race.

That first meeting produced three fundamental initiatives which have lasted for a century:
- The establishment of parent education study groups
- Home-school cooperation as represented by the partnership of parents and teachers
- Full utilization of the services of all agencies concerned with child welfare

It has been said that anyone who helps even one child makes the world a better place. The end-of-the-century efforts of this new association developed positive initiatives that would touch the lives of children for generations.



"All the News That's Fit to Print."

The New York Times.

VOL. XLVI...NO. 14,196. NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1897.—TWELVE PAGES. PRICE THREE CENTS.

LARGE GIFT TO ORPHANS

THE CONGRESS OF MOTHERS

GREEK VICTORY IN CRETE

MOTHERS' LAST WORDS

Congress to Meet Again in Washington Next Year.

A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Aims of the Organization Set Forth in a

The first meeting of the National Congress of Mothers on February 17, 1897, was covered by several newspapers including the prestigious *New York Times*, which featured a story on its cover page, and the *Washington Post* (inset).

Helen Lewis
Lillie Gilman
Alice M. Birney
President
Phebe A. Hearst
Bliss
Prtn Com.
J. L. McGill
Ext Com.
Helen T. Birney
Com
Fuller
Trans Com.
Mary Louise Butler
Cor. Secy.

The first board of managers pictured at the first national convention in Washington, DC, on February 17, 1897. The two women front and center are Alice Birney and Phoebe Hearst.

THE ORDER OF THE BATH

MOTHERS
WELCO

A LESSON ON THE CRADLE

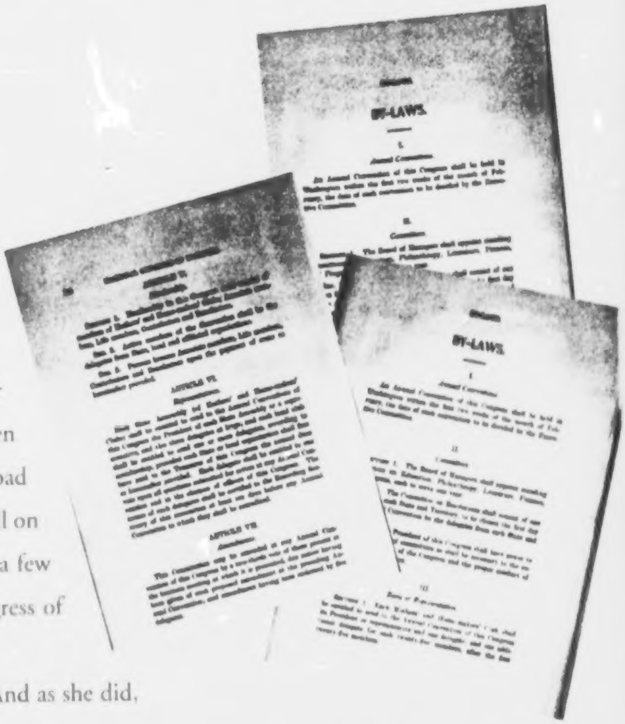
The Early Years

Alice Birney's second husband, Theodore, believed in her vision for the children of the nation. His support had been crucial to the success of the movement. As the heavy workload of organizing and inevitable delays and disappointments took their toll on his wife, he had been there to offer his rock-solid support. But only a few months after the triumph of the first meeting of the National Congress of Mothers, Theodore Birney died.

Becoming a widow again only made Alice Birney grow stronger. And as she did, so did the fledgling National Congress of Mothers.

Cofounders Birney and Hearst began planning for the second national conference—scheduled for May 2–7, 1898, again in Washington, DC. The board decided upon two major thrusts for the second meeting: to make the program international in scope and to ask convention presenters to emphasize the role of both mothers and fathers in child rearing.

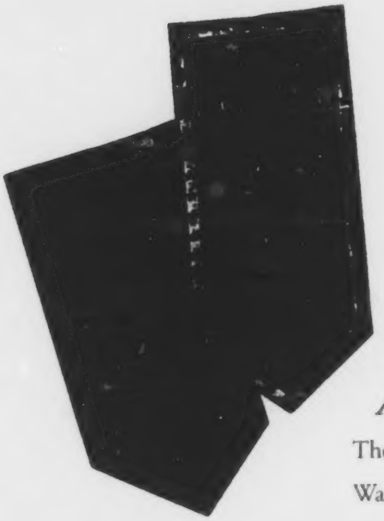
When Alice Birney addressed the second gathering—representatives from 350 mothers' clubs, unions, and societies in addition to a large attendance from the Washington, DC, area and surrounding states—she set the stage for the next steps in the evolution of the National Congress of Mothers:



These pages from the original printed book that held the convention proceedings show the first constitution and bylaws adopted by the National Congress of Mothers in 1898.

Opposite page: Pictured here are some examples of mothers receiving instruction on the cradle and the order of the bath.

> Last year you came to see what the Mothers' Congress was. This year you are here to effect definite state and national organizations, to have a voice in the conduct of affairs, to work for the cause; in other words, you are the National Congress of Mothers. In your arms I tenderly place the year-old child.



Original ribbons that the 1899 convention delegates wore to identify themselves as associate members or members of the entertainment committee.

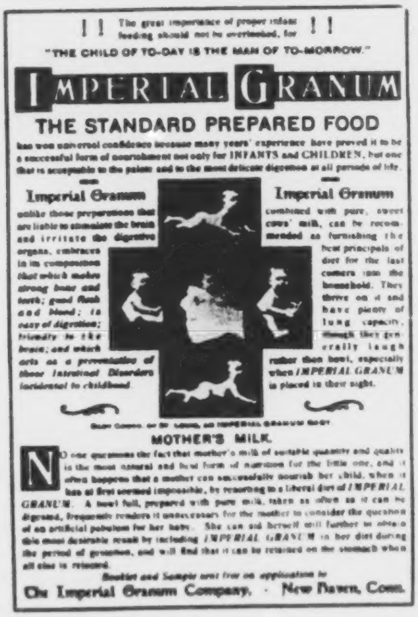
The delegates adopted a constitution and bylaws and called for the establishment of committees. During this period, Alice traveled a great deal, inspecting every kind of child welfare institution across the United States. She had firmly taken her place as president—an office she would keep for five years until poor health forced her resignation at the convention of 1902.

As the century ends

The third annual convention of the National Congress of Mothers—once again held in Washington, DC, in February 1899—almost did not happen.

The opening day was canceled because of a massive blizzard that swept the eastern seaboard the day before. Streets were impassable, dwindling stores of supplies could not be moved, and heating coal was running out. Delegates had to negotiate 10-foot-high snowdrifts. Most made it, but the meetings started a day later than scheduled. Those who braved the weather heard Alice Birney stress the importance of including fathers in the child-rearing process:

> No true-hearted man will shirk his duty in this crusade for the children, a warfare as glorious, I think, as men ever waged on a field of battle.



! ! The great importance of proper infant feeding should not be overlooked, for ! !

"THE CHILD OF TO-DAY IS THE MAN OF TO-MORROW."

IMPERIAL GRANUM

THE STANDARD PREPARED FOOD

has won universal confidence because many years' experience have proved it to be a successful form of nourishment not only for INFANTS and CHILDREN, but one that is acceptable to the palate and to the most delicate digestion at all periods of life.

Imperial Granum unlike those preparations that are liable to stimulate the brain and irritate the digestive organs, embraces in its composition *that which makes strong bone and teeth; good flesh and blood; is easy of digestion; friendly to the brain; and which acts as a preventative of those Intestinal Disorders incidental to childhood.*

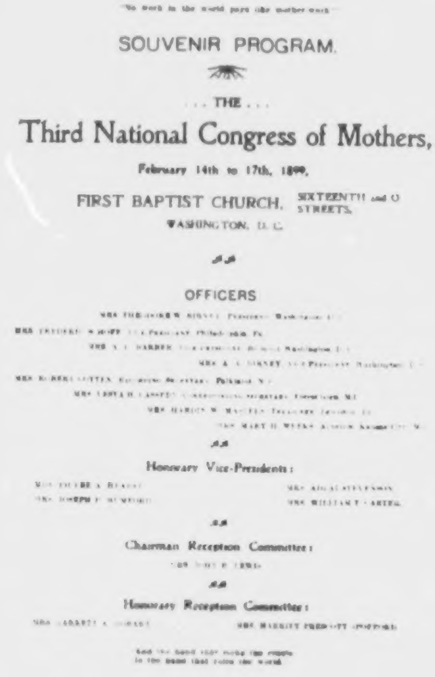
Imperial Granum combined with pure, sweet cows' milk, can be recommended as furnishing the best principals of diet for the last comers into the household. They thrive on it and have plenty of lung capacity, though they generally laugh rather than howl, especially when *IMPERIAL GRANUM* is placed in their sight.

MOTHER'S MILK.

NO one questions the fact that mother's milk of suitable quantity and quality is the most natural and best form of nutrition for the little one, and it often happens that a mother can successfully nourish her child, when it has at first seemed impossible, by resorting to a liberal diet of *IMPERIAL GRANUM*. A bowl full, prepared with pure milk, taken as often as it can be digested, frequently renders it unnecessary for the mother to consider the question of an artificial pabulum for her baby. She can aid herself still further to obtain this most desirable result by including *IMPERIAL GRANUM* in her diet during the period of gestation, and will find that it can be retained on the stomach when all else is rejected.

Booklet and Sample sent free on application to

The Imperial Granum Company, · New Haven, Conn.



SOUVENIR PROGRAM.

... THE ...

Third National Congress of Mothers,

February 14th to 17th, 1899,

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SIXTEENTH and O STREETS,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

OFFICERS

Honorary Vice-Presidents:

Chairman Reception Committee:

Honorary Reception Committee:

The program cover from the third annual convention of the National Congress of Mothers in 1899. Although this convention was almost canceled due to severe weather conditions, and began a day later than scheduled, it ended on a high note of hope for the future of the organization.

She called upon parents to set their priorities so that their children would get the attention and care they needed at home before being swept away by the demands of the larger world outside.

The board began a systematic effort to draw men into the organization and to interest them in the great issues involving children. The vehicle chosen for stimulating interest was courses on parent education. Assisted by experts in childhood education, the National Congress of Mothers provided groups of mothers and fathers with book lists and professional papers to create a thirst for acquiring parenting knowledge and then to satisfy that thirst with practical, useful information.

This marked the beginning of a flourishing publishing adjunct to the national association. But more important, it embodied the membership's growing belief in the need for a close partnership between home and school. The foundation of such a partnership was likened to a three-legged stool—one that required the support of thoughtful mothers, fathers, and teachers. Mothers were already looking for a better environment in which to raise their children, fathers were being brought into the fold, and now the push for greater cooperation between parents and teachers was emphasized. This belief produced several important outcomes of the "snowstorm" convention of 1899:

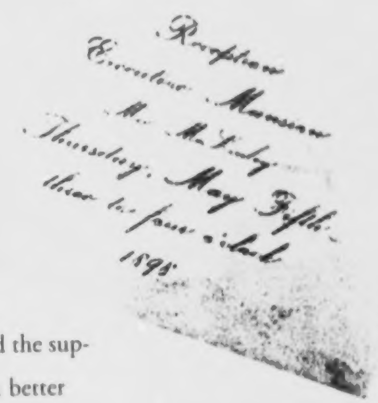
Mrs. Frederic (Hannah Kent) Schoff—who would become the first president of the Pennsylvania Congress of Mothers—presented a model for the first organized series of meetings between parents and teachers in schools. The plan she outlined for her state was the plan adopted by the National Congress of Mothers.

The delegates also decided to encourage and support the formation of state congresses and individual community units. Two states had already organized branches of the National Congress of Mothers—New York as early as 1897 and now Pennsylvania in 1899. Later that year, the Irving Parent-Teacher Association of Kansas City, Missouri—led by Mrs. Edwin R. Weeks—became the first formal community-level PTA unit formed under the sponsorship of the National Congress of Mothers.

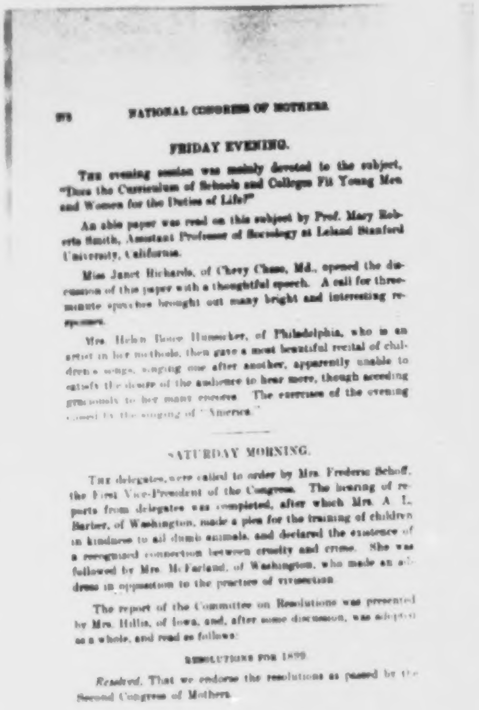
Finally, the delegates to the 1899 convention passed a historic resolution calling for "the establishment of a National Health Bureau, which shall disseminate knowledge tending towards the health of humanity." It would take time for the idea to bear fruit, but having planted this important seed, the National Congress of Mothers nurtured it for 14 years until, in 1913, the federal government created the United States Public Health Service.

The blizzard may have caused an uncertain beginning to the 1899 convention, but the gathering ended on a high note of hope for the future of the association.

First Lady Ida McKinley hosted a reception at the Executive Mansion for the 1898 convention delegates.



Reception
Executive Mansion
Mrs. McKinley
Thursday, May Fifth.
three to four o'clock
1898



[illegible] NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS

FRIDAY EVENING.

THE evening session was mainly devoted to the subject, "Does the Curriculum of Schools and Colleges Fit Young Men and Women for the Duties of Life?"

An able paper was read on this subject by Prof. Mary Roberts Smith, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Leland Stanford University, California.

Miss Janet Richards, of Chevy Chase, Md., opened the discussion of this paper with a thoughtful speech. A call for three-minute speeches brought out many bright and interesting responses.

Mrs. Helen Boice Hunsicker, of Philadelphia, who is an artist in her methods, then gave a most beautiful recital of children's songs, singing one after another, apparently unable to satisfy the desire of the audience to hear more, though acceding graciously to her many encores. The exercises of the evening closed by the singing of "America."

SATURDAY MORNING.

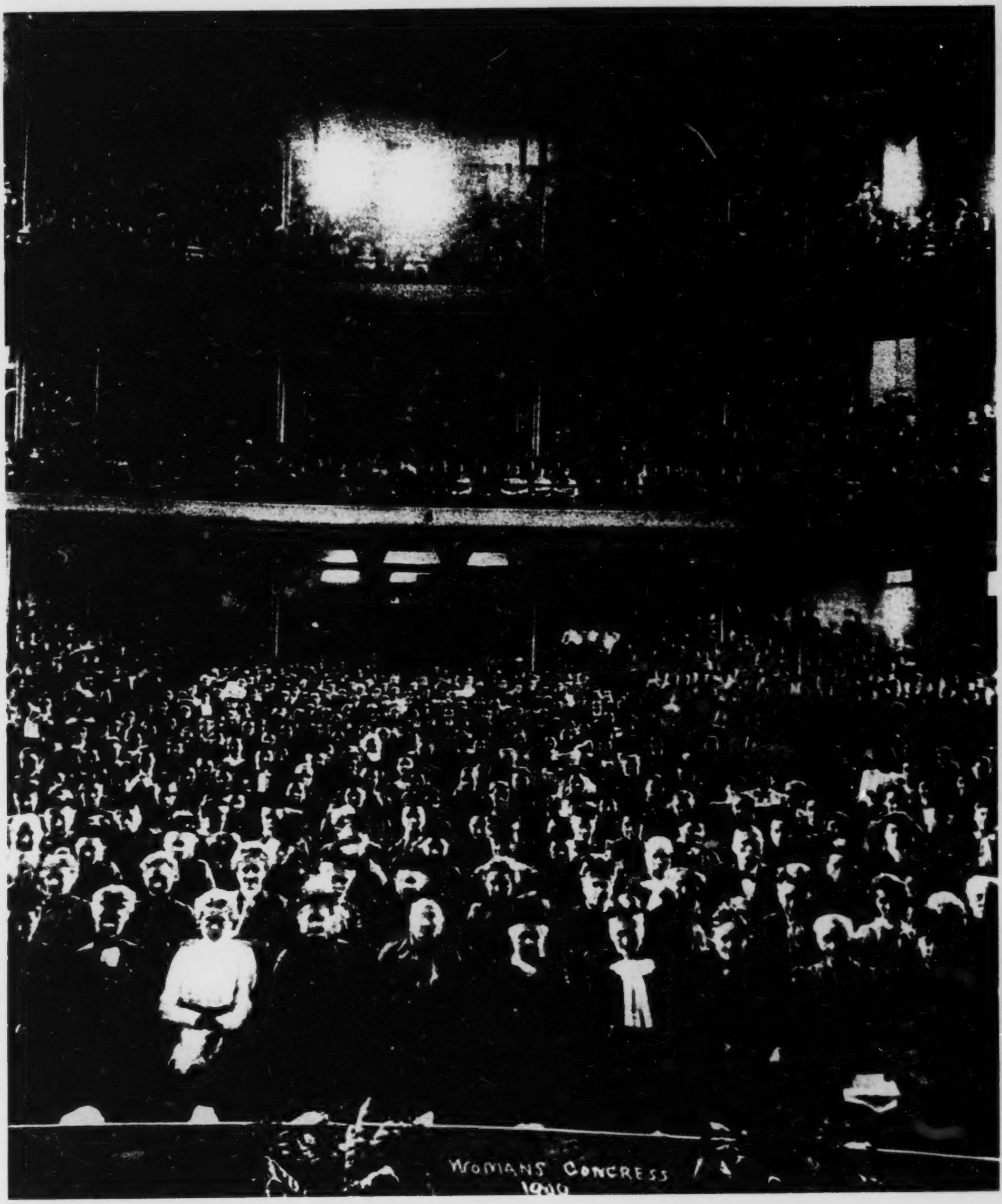
THE delegates were called to order by Mrs. Frederic Schoff, the First Vice-President of the Congress. The hearing of reports from delegates was completed, after which Mrs. A. L. Barber, of Washington, made a plea for the training of children in kindness to all dumb animals, and declared the existence of a recognized connection between cruelty and crime. She was followed by Mrs. McFarland, of Washington, who made an address in opposition to the practice of vivisection.

The report of the Committee on Resolutions was presented by Mrs. Hillis, of Iowa, and, after some discussion, was adopted as a whole, and read as follows:

RESOLUTIONS FOR 1899.

Resolved, That we endorse the resolutions as passed by the Second Congress of Mothers.

Delegates to the 1899 convention passed a historic resolution calling for "the establishment of a National Health Bureau, which shall disseminate knowledge tending towards the health of humanity." The federal government did not act upon this need until 1913 when it created the United States Public Health Service.


WOMANS CONGRESS

1900–1909

The year 1900 unleashed a new optimism among most Americans. U.S. President William McKinley was riding high thanks to economic stability at home and the victory in the Spanish-American War, which had thrust the United States into the spotlight as a new player on the international scene. Nationalistic fervor swept the land, and McKinley coasted to reelection that November.

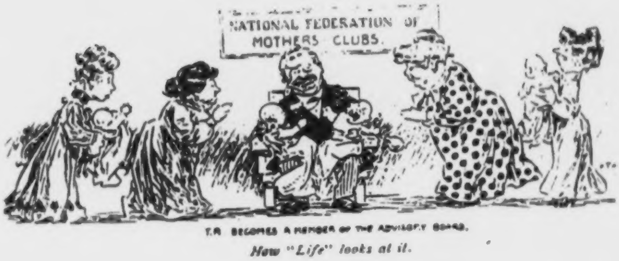
While the world was preoccupied with starting a new century, Alice Birney was busy traveling across the United States with a new goal—to organize regional and state branches of the National Congress of Mothers. Four state branches were established that year in Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, and New Jersey. From that time until 1927, hardly a year passed without a state or states becoming incorporated into the national association. In 1926, state branches, or *congresses*, numbered 49. (See "Year of Incorporation" box, p. 21.)

While working in Albany that March, at the convention of the New York Assembly of Mothers—the New York state branch of the National Congress of Mothers—Alice met then-governor of New York, Theodore Roosevelt.

The New York Assembly of Mothers was invited to hold a social reception—hosted by Teddy's wife, Edith Kermit Roosevelt—at the governor's executive mansion. While there, the governor invited Mrs. Birney—together with Hannah Schoff, national vice president, and Mrs. David (Mary Grinnell) Mears, New York Assembly president—to visit 3-year-old Quentin, the youngest of the Roosevelts' six children.

Mrs. Birney took advantage of this golden opportunity to invite the governor to serve on the proposed Advisory Council of the National Congress of Mothers. This group would be com-

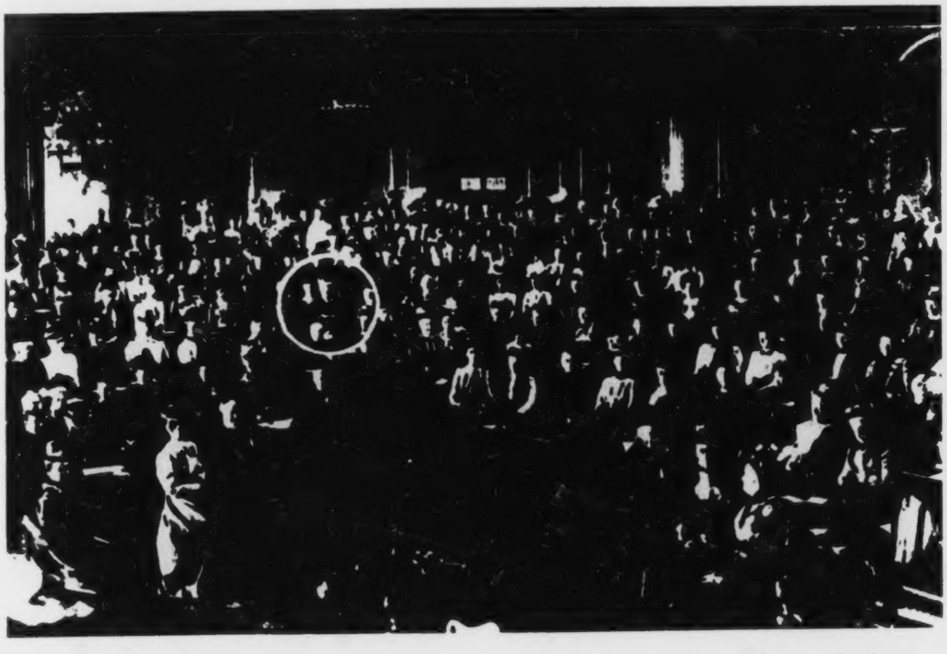
Opposite page: The Iowa Congress was one of the first state branches of the National Congress of Mothers to be established. Its charter was approved by the delegates to the fourth national convention meeting in May 1900, in Des Moines, Iowa. Also established that year were the Connecticut, Illinois, and New Jersey state branches.


NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
MOTHERS CLUBS.
T.R. BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY BOARD.
How "Life" looks at it.

Theodore Roosevelt's appointment to the Advisory Council of the National Congress of Mothers was thus depicted by one of the humor magazines of the day.

posed of fathers who were to be brought more fully and formally into the organization and whose involvement, she believed, would assist in building a network of influential counselors. Roosevelt accepted immediately. He would serve as chairman of the Advisory Council and remain an active member, even during his presidency, until his death in 1919.

With his appointment, the association gained a vital and vocal champion. His credentials and high visibility were a dramatic encouragement for other fathers to join. Little did any of the members know then how high that visibility would become.



In March of 1900, at the convention of the New York Assembly of Mothers in Albany, Alice met the then-governor of New York, Theodore Roosevelt. (Roosevelt is circled in the photo.) At a social reception organized by the governor's wife, Edith Kermit Roosevelt, Mrs. Birney asked the governor if he would serve on a proposed advisory council composed exclusively of fathers. Roosevelt readily accepted and served as chairman of the council until his death in 1919.

The 1900s

U.S. presidents: William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft

Headlines: Boer War leads to South African independence; U.S. President William McKinley assassinated; U.S. troops occupy Cuba; Excavation of Panama Canal begins; Great San Francisco earthquake kills 700; Wright Brothers fly a powered airplane; New York policeman arrests woman for smoking cigarette in public; Helen Keller is graduated from Radcliffe College; Einstein formulates Special Theory of Relativity

Daily life: Fuller Brush salesmen start going door to door; 18-year-old Joyce Clyde Hall starts a greeting card company to be called Hallmark; After a century of steam, the century of electricity begins; Steerage rates for immigrants to U.S. cut to $10; Passage of Pure Food and Drug Act; Night shift work for women prohibited internationally; Fountain pens become popular; The first daily comic strip, Mr. Mutt (later changed to Mutt and Jeff); U.S. celebrates first Mother's Day; Average age at death: 47; U.S. population: 76 million; Average income: $593; Average public school teacher's income: $431; Average home: $4,500; Loaf of bread: 5¢; Refrigerator: $27.50; Woman's corset: $1.50

Movies: At 12 minutes, The Great Train Robbery is longest film to date; First regular movie theater opens in Pittsburgh; First newsreels; D.W. Griffith features Mary Pickford, the first movie star.

Books: Just So Stories, Peter Rabbit, The Call of the Wild, Peter Pan, The Jungle, The Wind in the Willows, Anne of Green Gables

Art & music: The Cake Walk is the most fashionable dance; Rag time jazz develops in U.S.; Elgar composes first of his Pomp and Circumstance marches; Franz Lehar's The Merry Widow; First Ziegfeld Follies

Radio: Marconi transmits first radio messages

What's new? The hamburger, electrocardiograph, Jergen's Lotion, teddy bears, rayon, neon lights, permanent waves, Harley-Davidson motorcycle, instant coffee, Post Toasties, Campbell's Pork and Beans, A-1 Sauce, linoleum, Model-T Ford

The fourth Annual Convention of the National Congress of Mothers was held in Des Moines, Iowa, in an effort to recruit some of the Midwestern states into organizing state branches.

Later that same year Teddy Roosevelt was nominated as vice president of the United States—then unexpectedly became president in 1901 when William McKinley was assassinated.

Years later, Roosevelt would write in a letter to Hannah Schoff:

> I feel that your Congress of Mothers is the association which I care the most among all the associations...You are all dealing with the really vital things of life, and you are dealing with them in such a fine, sane, healthy way. I count my acquaintance with you and Mrs. Birney as among the real prizes that have come to me during the past few years.

The conventions meet in the heartland

In May 1900, the National Congress of Mothers held its annual convention in Des Moines, Iowa. This first foray beyond the Potomac was made to the heartland to show support for the formation of Midwestern state branches. At the convention, both the Iowa and the Illinois branches were inducted into the association adding to the symbolism of the occasion.

But it was not just symbolism that occupied the delegates. That year also marked the formal beginning of a campaign that would run throughout the long history of the association—to enact and support social reforms affecting children. Among those who addressed the delegates was Chicago Judge Harvey B. Hurd, who had formed the first juvenile court in Chicago and helped draft the world's first probation act.

Historically, the courts' treatment of children in the United States had been deplorable. Judge Hurd's reforms concentrated on the establishment and improvement of juvenile courts, on improving the conditions faced by children in detention homes, and on the expansion of a humane probation system for first-time offenders. The National Congress of Mothers seized upon Judge Hurd's initiatives as a rallying cry, one that would result in legislative action the following year. (See "Bringing Justice to Juveniles," p. 110.)

Year of Incorporation of PTA State Congresses

New York	1897
Pennsylvania	1899
Connecticut	1900
Illinois	1900
Iowa	1900
New Jersey	1900
Ohio	1901
California	1902
District of Columbia	1905
Idaho	1905
Oregon	1905
Washington	1905
Arizona	1906
Georgia	1906
Colorado	1907
Mississippi	1909
Rhode Island	1909
Texas	1909
Massachusetts	1910
Wisconsin	1910
Alabama	1911
Delaware	1911
Tennessee	1911
Indiana	1912
Missouri	1912
Vermont	1912
New Hampshire	1913
Kansas	1914
Maryland	1915
Montana	1915
New Mexico	1915
North Dakota	1915
South Dakota	1915
Maine	1916
Kentucky	1918
Michigan	1918
North Carolina	1919
Florida	1921
Virginia	1921
Minnesota	1922
Nebraska	1922
Oklahoma	1922
Louisiana	1923
South Carolina	1923
West Virginia	1923
Wyoming	1923
Arkansas	1925
Utah	1925
Hawaii	1926
Nevada	1940
Alaska	1957
European Congress	1958
Pacific Congress	1991

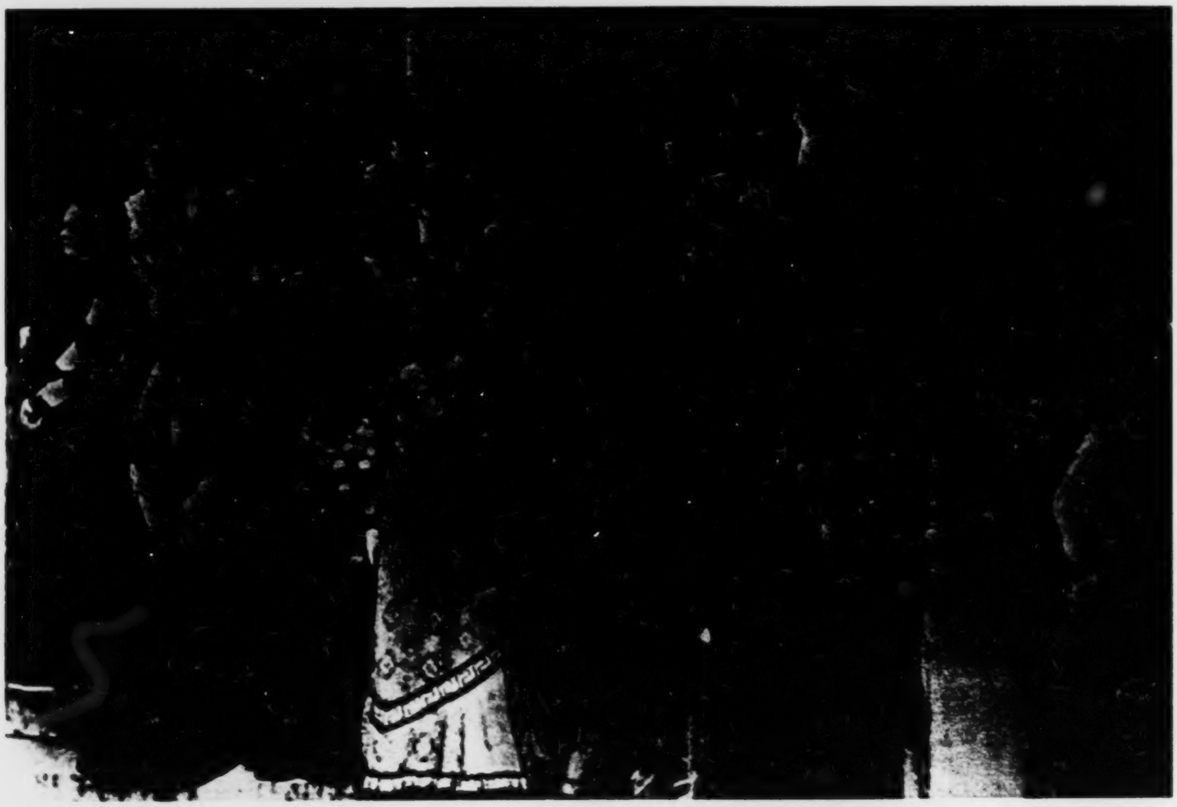
The 1900 convention was addressed by Chicago Judge Harvey B. Hurd, who had formed the first juvenile court in Chicago and helped draft the world's first probation act. The national congress seized upon Judge Hurd's initiatives as a rallying cry, one that would result in legislative action the following year.

In 1901, the national convention took place in Columbus, Ohio. For the first time delegates voted to levy national dues to support the parent association's activities. The initial national portion of annual dues was 5 cents per member.

The real concerns at the 1901 convention, however, were issues—not nickels. The compelling ideas about juvenile justice and parent-teacher cooperation presented the previous year had caught the interest of the membership.

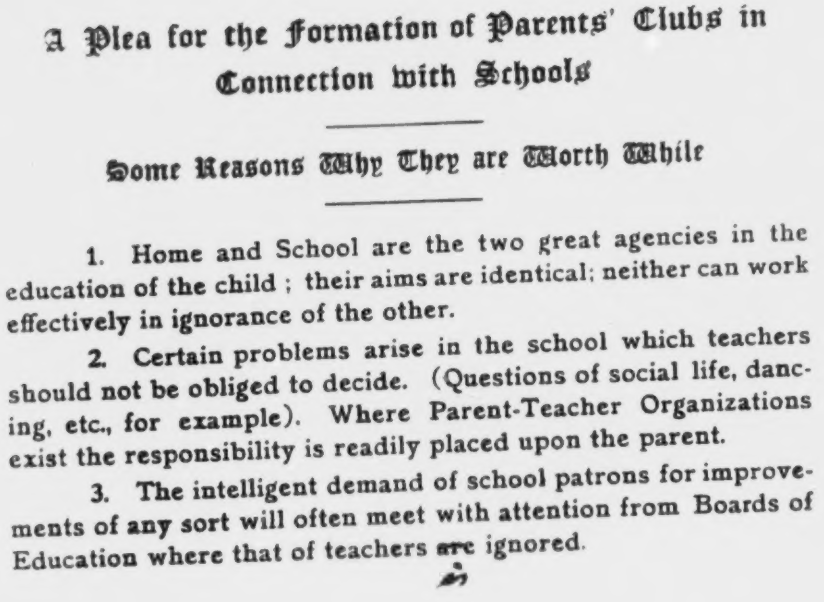
Judge Hurd was invited back, this time to announce that the Pennsylvania General Assembly had passed legislation establishing a juvenile court and a probation system along the lines he had outlined—and which had received overwhelming endorsement from the delegates in 1900.

In a similar vein, the New York Assembly of Mothers brought New York State Superintendent of Public Instruction Charles R. Skinner to the 1901 national convention to describe how his initiatives brought about a workable structure for home-school cooperation. Skinner told the delegates:



In 1901, the same year the national convention was held in Columbus, Ohio, the state of Ohio was added to the growing number of state branches. Alice Birney attended the organization meeting of the Ohio Congress in May, 1901, and can be seen second from the left in the front row, holding a bouquet of flowers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



A Plea for the Formation of Parents' Clubs in Connection with Schools

Some Reasons Why They are Worth While

1. Home and School are the two great agencies in the education of the child ; their aims are identical; neither can work effectively in ignorance of the other.

2. Certain problems arise in the school which teachers should not be obliged to decide. (Questions of social life, dancing, etc., for example). Where Parent-Teacher Organizations exist the responsibility is readily placed upon the parent.

3. The intelligent demand of school patrons for improvements of any sort will often meet with attention from Boards of Education where that of teachers ~~are~~ is ignored.

The New York Assembly of Mothers brought New York State Superintendent of Public Instruction Charles R. Skinner to the 1901 convention in Columbus, Ohio, to describe how his initiatives brought about a workable structure for home-school cooperation. Pictured here is an early plea for parent involvement in schools, an issue that is still one of the PTA's strongest.

> The Mothers' Congress is a movement that gives great encouragement to the hearts of educators. It will draw closer lines between home and school and bring into a closer bond of sympathy the parents and the teachers.

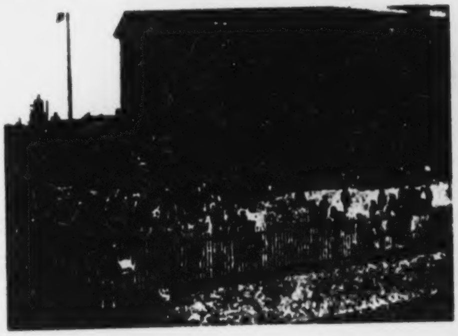
Changes for the nation and the Mothers' Congress

In the year between the 1901 and 1902 conventions, the nation was racked by traumatic change. On September 6, 1901, an anarchist shot President William McKinley at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Eight days later the president died from those wounds.

The assassin's bullets thrust McKinley's vice president, Theodore Roosevelt, to center stage of the U.S. government. The American people waited to see what it could look forward to from their new leader. But Alice Birney and others committed to helping children already knew in part what to expect from Teddy Roosevelt.

The new president openly demonstrated the delight he took in his own children—and had proven a staunch member of the National Congress of Mothers almost since its inception. It was no small coincidence that his priorities were also those of the national congress. With his six children in the White House, Theodore Roosevelt made involved parenthood a popular crusade.

The sixth national convention of the National Congress of Mothers took place in February 1902, once again in Washington, DC.



As the decade unfolded, the work of the congress became more and more focused on the well-being of children at home, at school, and in the community.

The conference featured a wide array of demonstrations, laboratories, simulations, and "show-and-tell" for the fathers and mothers. Actual models of an operating kindergarten, day nursery, educational and safe toys—plus a broad range of print material on child care and training—were available for inspection and discussion.

By now, the National Congress of Mothers was a dynamic, flourishing, and innovative institution, dedicated to serving the nation's children through an enlightened approach to education, home environment, health, safety, and correction.

Precisely at this pinnacle of accomplishment, basking in the acclaim of the convention delegates, Alice McLellan Birney announced her resignation.

Citing poor health, she stepped back from the limelight, back from the demanding schedule, and back from the strenuous days of advocacy for the nation's children. The delegates immediately elected her Honorary President for Life, a designation changed to Founder in 1905.

At the outset, Alice Birney had acted on a gnawing notion that something could be done to improve conditions for children deprived of a healthy, safe, edifying, and secure childhood. While attending the Chautauqua conference in the summer of 1895, she received encouragement from like-minded thinkers to create a national congress of mothers. From that point on she worked to build an organization committed to working for the benefit of all children.

Her friendship with Phoebe Apperson Hearst and her alliances with U.S. presidents, vice presidents, and their wives—all enabled this woman's vision to take hold and flourish.

Her legacy as a leader was admirable. She not only cofounded the association but succeeded in expanding it to state, regional, and community levels. Above all, Alice Birney heightened the nation's awareness of the plight and problems besetting its children—and attracted the interest, attention, and cooperation of the nation's parents, teachers, and education and business leaders.

Alice McLellan Birney announced her resignation from the National Congress of Mothers in 1902, citing poor health. Even though she left behind a flourishing organization, she was a mother, first and foremost. Her commitment to her children is what Alice Birney might consider her true legacy.

She left an association at the threshold of greatness. Yet despite the accolades, Alice Birney was a mother, first and foremost—as demonstrated by a touching moment at the first convention in 1897. On the final day of the inaugural meeting, her two daughters mounted the stage and sped over to the podium where she was presiding. They had not seen their mother for two days and wrapped their arms around her in delight.

Alice briefly paused, then excused herself to "hold a secret session for a few moments," while Phoebe Hearst took over the meeting without pause or explanation.

This heartfelt commitment—of parent to child—is what Alice Birney might consider her true legacy. It's a commitment that she had in common with every single member of the national congress who would follow in her footsteps.

A new dynamo shapes the association

Following Alice Birney's resignation, the delegates did not have to look far for another inspired leader and visionary to carry on the association mission. The reins of the National Congress of Mothers were turned over to Hannah Kent Schoff at that same convention. She would serve as president of the national congress for the next 18 years.

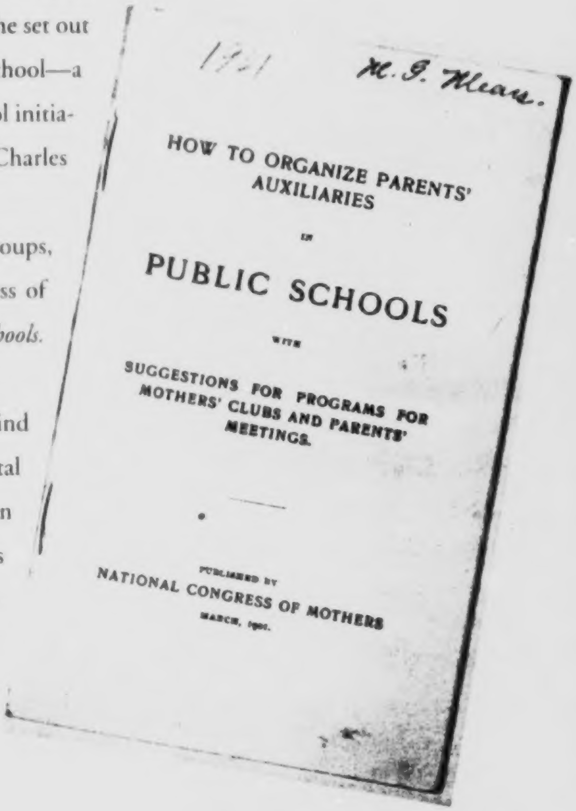
Hannah Kent Schoff, president, National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, 1902–1920

Hannah Schoff had worked closely with Alice Birney and Phoebe Hearst since 1898, planning convention programs and serving as a national vice president. Her husband, Frederic Schoff, was a charter member of the Advisory Council.

Known for her organizational skills, Mrs. Schoff brought pragmatism and practicality to her administration. She set out to ally local parent associations with every public school—a logical follow-up on the groundbreaking home-school initiatives introduced to the 1901 convention by Charles Skinner.

Mrs. Schoff had often told organizing parent groups, "Do it through the schools!" The National Congress of Mothers published a leaflet, *How to Organize Parents' Auxiliaries in Public Schools.* The result was a closer working relationship between parents and teachers.

During the first few years of her administration, Mrs. Schoff was a whirlwind not only organizing but also lobbying and advocating for more governmental responsiveness to children's needs. Successful annual meetings were held in Detroit (1903), Chicago (1904), Washington, DC (1905), Los Angeles (1907), and again in Washington in 1908. The only blank was the 1906 convention. Originally scheduled for Los Angeles, the event was canceled—because of the turmoil created by the San Francisco earthquake.


1901 M. G. Mears.

HOW TO ORGANIZE PARENTS' AUXILIARIES

IN

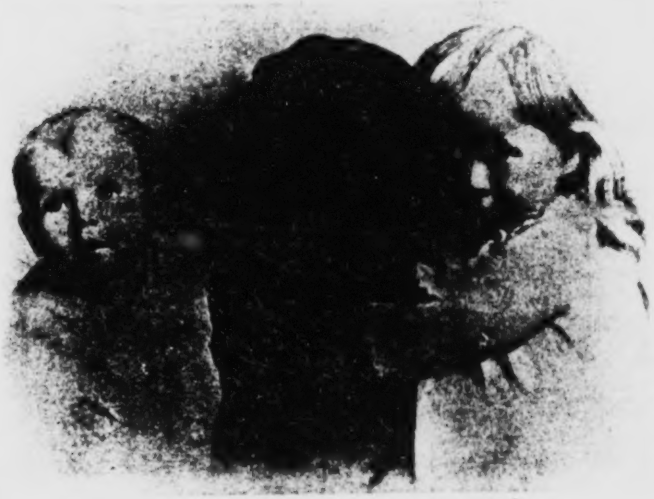
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WITH

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAMS FOR MOTHERS' CLUBS AND PARENTS' MEETINGS.

PUBLISHED BY
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS
MARCH, 1901.

The leaflet *How to Organize Parents' Auxiliaries in Public Schools*, was developed by Hannah Kent Schoff to ensure that a local parent group became allied with every public school in this country. "Do it through the schools!" she often said regarding the organization of parent groups.


Pictured here with her two young sons is Hannah Kent Schoff. Prior to her election as president of the National Congress of Mothers in 1902, she was a national congress vice president and the first president of the Pennsylvania Congress of Mothers from its founding in 1899. Her husband, Frederic Schoff, was a charter member of the Advisory Council, serving with Teddy Roosevelt.

A convention pin from Detroit, Michigan, 1903.

Some milestones achieved during the early years of the Schoff administration included a 1903 resolution calling for the creation of university courses to help potential probation officers deal with delinquent and dependent children. In 1904, Mrs. Schoff persuaded President Roosevelt to endorse the juvenile court and probation system in an address to the U.S. Congress.

In a landmark resolution, delegates in 1905 endorsed a specific call for federal assistance for the education of children in kindergarten classes and elementary schools.

One of Alice Birney's goals was achieved when that same convention body voted to establish an official publication—the *National Congress of Mothers Magazine.* The first issue appeared in November 1906. Since then, this magazine—under a variety of names and formats—has been published continuously. (See "The Voice of the PTA—90 Years in Print," p. 68.) Today PTA members know the magazine as *Our Children.*

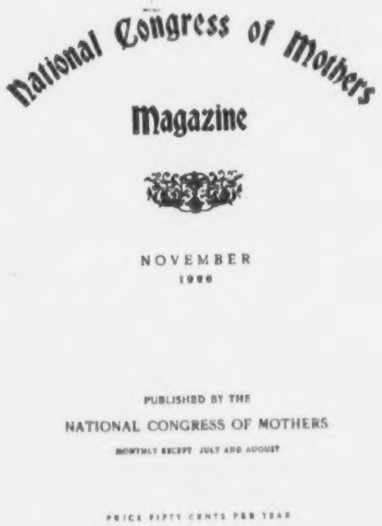
As Hannah Schoff guided the evolution of the association into a growing nationwide force, both Alice Birney and Phoebe Hearst remained interested and supportive. But fragile health plagued them both. On December 20, 1907, at the age of 49, Alice McLellan Birney passed away. She did not live to see the next logical move for the National Congress of Mothers.

The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations

In 1908, delegates to the Washington convention voted to change the name of the organization to the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. [Editor's note: In the remainder of this book, the association will be referred to as the National PTA or the PTA.] They felt the new name more closely reflected the initiatives and involvement of dedicated mothers and fathers as well as teachers, who were the growing and targeted membership.

The 1904 national convention in Chicago, Illinois.

The time was characterized by National PTA activities not unlike those of decades later—the continued formation of local units. These were the first mothers' study groups, some of which had existed previously although unaffiliated with a national association. Many of them functioned outside the schools even while cooperating with the school staffs to help educate adults. The National PTA formulated programs for these study groups and helped them attract local members. The association also worked with other organizations to promote child welfare.


National Congress of Mothers

Magazine

NOVEMBER
1906

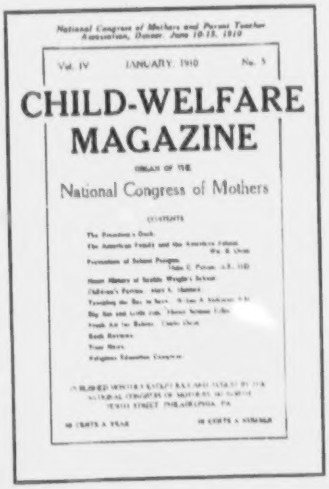
PUBLISHED BY THE
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS
MONTHLY EXCEPT JULY AND AUGUST

PRICE FIFTY CENTS PER YEAR

The first issue of the *National Congress of Mothers' Magazine* was published in November of 1906. The PTA magazine, under a variety of names and formats, has been published continuously since that time.

At the 1909 convention, the delegates voted to rename the national congress publication *Child-Welfare Magazine.*

That same eventful year, the National PTA took the movement international. With the strong and vocal support of President Roosevelt, the First International Congress on the Welfare of the Child was held under the sponsorship of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. Representatives of 12 countries on 4 continents attended—along with PTA members from 31 states. The international congress was deemed successful, having inspired the representatives from Spain, India, Japan, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, to begin forming mothers' study groups and expanding activities for underprivileged children upon returning home.


National Congress of Mothers and Parent Teacher Association, Denver, June 10-15, 1910

Vol. IV JANUARY, 1910 No. 5

CHILD-WELFARE
MAGAZINE

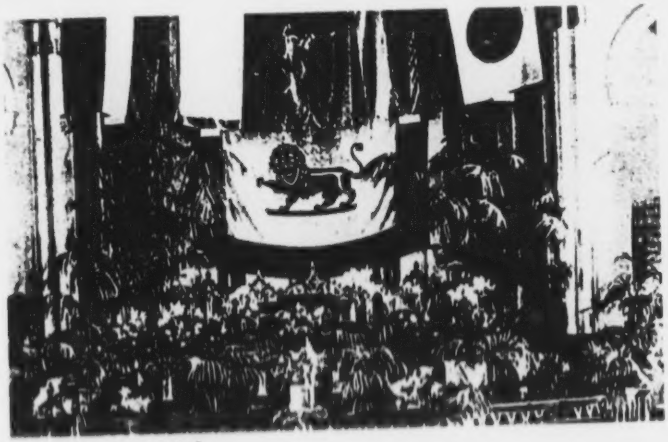
ORGAN OF THE

National Congress of Mothers

CONTENTS

At the 1909 convention, the delegates voted to rename the National PTA publication *Child-Welfare Magazine,* in keeping with the activist thrust of the membership.

As Theodore Roosevelt's administration came to a close in early 1909, he called a special Conference on Dependent Children—the first in a series of White House conferences on children. The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations was in attendance. Since then the National PTA has been a major presence in every White House conference involving the needs of children.



In 1908 the First International Congress on the Welfare of the Child was held, with help from President Roosevelt. Representatives from 12 countries on 4 continents attended, along with members from 31 states.

Mothers' study groups, such as this class in the 1920s served a dual purpose: not only would they help to educate parents, they also helped build membership.

SCHOOLING PARENTS

> In [the late 1800s]...there was a dawning awareness that parental attitudes and practices might be altogether sincere and yet tragically mistaken. New scientific discoveries about the child...were finding their way...onto the public platform. American fathers and mothers were finding that there was something profoundly important they had to learn.
>
> *Where Children Come First: A Study of the P.T.A. Idea*
> Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, 1949

Set against the Gay Nineties backdrop of progress and growth were sweatshops, poverty, and child neglect. At this time, new thinking was emerging about children as well as new questions about raising them properly. Alice Birney, one of those "thinkers" and "questioners," recorded her observations:

> Injustices perpetrated upon little children through ignorance or neglect had aroused my indignation....I asked myself for the thousandth time, "How can it be prevented? How can mothers be educated and the nation made to recognize the supreme importance of the child?"

Ultimately, Mrs. Birney determined the answer was to create a national congress whose "all-embracing aim," she stated to the first convention attendees, would be "child study on the part of mothers and fathers and teachers and everyone who [has] anything to do with children."

Child psychologist G. Stanley Hall is credited with ushering in the child study movement of the late 1880s and 1890s—urging mothers and teachers to study, observe, and research their children's development. At the center of the movement was the child study club, a group of mothers who met regularly to read about and discuss topics in child training. Research points to the National Congress of Mothers as playing a pivotal role in institutionalizing the parent education movement in the 1920s.

The board of managers of the early congress built the association by recruiting existing child study groups and organizing new ones. When representatives from these newly recruited groups attended the association's annual conventions, they gained information from top authorities on a wide variety of child development topics.

With its third convention, the National Congress of Mothers began providing parenting resources to its study groups free of charge. A large collection of loan papers on child development and parenting skills was also created in the early decades, which

One of the earliest goals of the National Congress of Mothers was to provide parents with the necessary skills to nurture their children's growth and development.

study groups could use as program resources then return to the national office.

Two major early congress projects focused on the challenges of parents. The first was a series of eight books—published in 1914—called *Parents and Their Problems*, and the second—produced in the late 1920s—a collection of materials and resources called the *Parent Education Yearbook* for enlightening parents to the needs of their children.

In the late 1940s and again in the 1980s, the National PTA worked to expand its parent education program by training members to lead parent education study groups. Where materials of the 1940s came from study course articles and program guides regularly run in *National Parent-Teacher* magazine, the materials for the 1980s came out of a joint National PTA and National Foundation-March of Dimes (MOD) effort called Helping Parents to Deal with Adolescent Sexuality.

PTA & MOD
STARTING A HEALTHY FAMILY
MARCH OF DIMES
PARENT SEMINARS

Parent seminars, a joint project of the National PTA and the March of Dimes, trained parents to communicate with their preteens and teens regarding teens' developing sexuality.

The PTA-MOD partnership began in the mid-1970s as an effort to help parents educate their preteens and teens about sexuality, to help curb the high incidence of birth defects among babies of teen mothers. The partnership had many facets, including the Parent Education Award—given annually by MOD to a local unit for conducting an exceptional parent education project—and development of the program kit *Parenting: The Underdeveloped Skill* for improving parent-child communication. In 1994, this popular kit was revamped, expanded, and renamed the *PTA Parenting Guide*.

Whether through loan papers, convention speakers, nationally sponsored workshops, magazine articles, brochures, booklets, videos, or online chats with experts, the National PTA has served its original purpose: to educate parents with the most recent thinking on child development and parenting. As long as there are new generations of parents, the PTA will provide this kind of information.

This photo from the 1957 National PTA Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, illustrates the kinds of parent seminars that were offered to attendees for learning and sharing ideas relating to children and schools. Convention continues to be one of the best places for PTA parents to network with each other and gather as much information as possible.

In 1910, this local PTA, the Mothers' Circle of the 19th Ward in Philadelphia, instructed mothers on child care and hygiene to reduce infant mortality rates.

1910–1919

By 1910, the ranks of the National Congress of Mothers had swelled to more than 20,000 members. The annual meeting in Denver, Colorado, of that year was a testament to the congress' expansion efforts.

The start of the 20th century's second decade also marked an indelible change in the very nature of the United States. First, more than half of the population now lived in cities or towns of 2,500 people or more. This turning point signified a quiet but irreversible switch to an urban/industrial society from what traditionally had been a rural/agrarian one. Moreover, whatever problems the United States faced, it served—as it does today—as a magnet for the hard-pressed masses of other countries. Of the 92 million people living in this country in 1910, some 5 million were foreign-born.

The great tide of emigration to the United States was just beginning—and gave rise to movements calling for restrictions on further immigration. The influx of immigrants created demands for programs to help assimilate the waves of newcomers who came to live and work in a new land that held out a promise of a better life. The United States meant opportunity in a legion of languages. Most of the immigrants settled in the cities, thus speeding up the urbanization of the United States. Their presence put increasing strains on the supplies to meet basic needs—jobs, shelter, medical care, and education.

Nor were these the only demands made upon our society. The year 1910 saw the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, bringing racial inequality to the nation's conscience. It was also the year that Washington State gave women the right to vote. A full decade would pass before ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, in 1920, extended this right nationwide. Remarkably, even before the female members of the PTA—who were by far the majority—were able to use their vote to inform policy makers of their positions, they had many successes getting their causes acknowledged and acted upon.

The 1910s

U.S. presidents: Grover Cleveland, Woodrow Wilson

Headlines: S.S. Titanic sinks; World War I, "the war to end all wars"; Panama Canal opens; Law establishing 8-hour work day for railroad workers prevents nationwide strike; U.S. goes dry as Prohibition Amendment ratified; Robert E. Perry reaches the North Pole and Roald Amundsen, the South Pole; Halley's comet observed; Henry Ford pioneers assembly line; Four women suffragists arrested for picketing the White House sentenced to six months in jail; New psychologies of Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung stir controversies; "Black Sox" bribery scandal rocks baseball

Daily life: "Week-end" becomes popular in U.S.; 16th Amendment introduces federal income tax; Motorized taxis hit the street; Bobbed hair fashion sweeps U.S.; Air mail postage and daylight savings introduced; U.S. population: 92 million; Average income: $887; Average public school teacher's income: $346; Average home: $5,400; Loaf of bread: 8¢; Refrigerator: $27.50; Crayons (28 colors): 4¢

Movies: John Bray invents motion picture cartoons; By 1912, 5 million people attend cinemas daily; First Charlie Chaplin movies; D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation and Intolerance

Books: Pygmalion, Tarzan of the Apes, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Of Human Bondage

Art & music: The tango and fox trot become popular; Irving Berlin's Alexander's Rag Time Band; New Orleans jazz in bloom

Popular songs: Ivor Novello writes British war song Keep the Home Fires Burning while George M. Cohan writes the American war anthem Over There

What's new? The zipper, peppermint Life Savers, canned pineapple, cellophane, traffic lights, brassieres, Pyrex glass, automatic pop-up toaster, dial telephones, the first plastics

The crisis of a world war would sour the earlier national mood of optimism. But that never deterred Hannah Schoff's administration from confronting a wide range of concerns—both old and new. The National PTA viewed the content of the newly popular motion pictures with some alarm. It also held strong conviction about the importance of early childhood education. Above all, it still pursued a day when all children would be properly fed at home and in school.

Expanding the dream

For Hannah Schoff and the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, the decade began with a nostalgic moment—the passage of a motion to celebrate Founders Day annually on February 17. The observance recognized the accomplishments of both Alice Birney and Phoebe Hearst as well as the date of the first Congress of Mothers convention. The event is still commemorated today by PTAs across the country. (See box on opposite page.)

President Hannah Schoff took on numerous duties in addition to leading the National Congress of Mothers. For eight years she directed the Home Education Division in the U.S. Bureau of Education, until it became a separate government agency in 1919.

Then it was back to work with Mrs. Schoff leading spirited moves to bring hot lunch programs to all the nation's public schools. Hannah Schoff knew that in order for more good to be accomplished on behalf of the children of her generation and those to come, the National PTA needed a solid financial foundation. So she launched a crusade to increase the association's membership and, from the dues generated, secure a stable financial base for such purposes as underwriting studies, producing publications, and making presentations across the country. Mrs. Schoff kept up a dizzying pace of travel, speaking before state chapters and regional organizing committees, as well as urging mothers and fathers to join for the benefits the association would bring them in meeting with like-minded parents and involved teachers.

In 1911 alone, Hannah Schoff made 24 separate membership organizing trips throughout the nation. By this time, 23 state congresses were officially incorporated under the national association. (See "Year of Incorporation" box, p. 21.)

As the horizons of the national congress expanded, all positions and policies came under continuous review. Standing committees, called departments, were created to study and advance positions on a wide range of child-related issues: child hygiene, organizational finances, good roads, rural school improvements, international outreach, kindergarten extension, marriage sanctity, and playground and social centers—to name a few from the extensive and expanding list.

The 1911 convention in Washington, DC, buzzed with the excitement of a Second International Congress on the Welfare of the Child organized in conjunction with the National PTA's annual meeting. The international gathering focused on "The Relation of Home, School, Church, and State to Child Welfare" and to reducing the infant mortality rate.

Equally significant, delegates to the PTA convention agreed to work for a separate home education division within the U.S. Bureau of Education. Within two years, such a division was up and running, publishing and distributing literature to help parents expand their participation in the education of their children. Quite different from the present-day *home schooling* movement, *home education* was an international movement that encouraged parents to use books and other resources to become knowledgeable about the task of training children—the philosophy being that the development of a child's mental hygiene, moral character, and physical well-being began at home. National PTA's interest in establishing the new division within the U.S. Bureau of Education had intensified when in August 1910, Mrs. Schoff and other national officers attended the Third International Congress on Home Education, in Brussels,

INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS
WELFARE
OF THE CHILD
DELEGATE
WASHINGTON

In 1911, the National PTA cosponsored the Second International Congress on the Welfare of the Child.

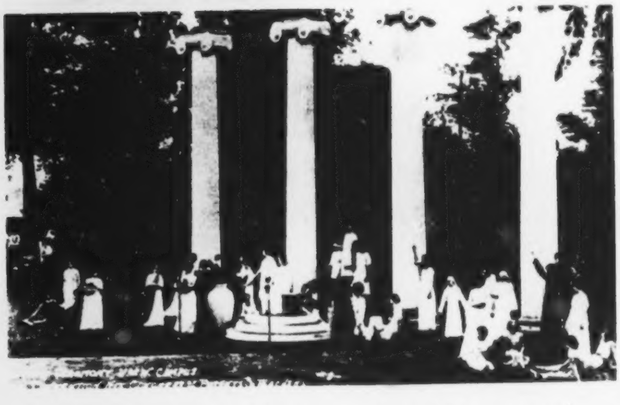
FOUNDERS DAY

At the 1910 convention in Denver, Mary Grinnell Mears—charter member and board member of the National Congress of Mothers—moved that "Founders Day be observed in every [Mothers'] Circle on February 17th of each year.. "Although the motion passed, it took two years to be confirmed.

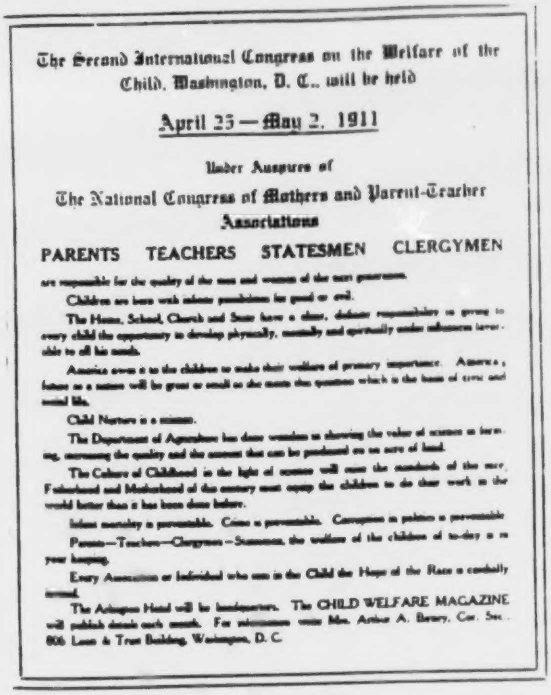
The name Founders Day became interchangeable with Child Welfare Day for several years, after the association inaugurated an American Child Welfare Campaign in 1912 to "[arouse] the whole country to a sense of its duty and responsibility to childhood." The campaign helped make "February 17 an important day in the calendar of the Congress and of the parents of the nation..."

Before the first celebration, in 1913, Mrs. Mears sent letters to state presidents asking "that your Mothers' Circle, or Parent-Teacher Association...unite with organizations of mothers all over the country, in observance of Child Welfare Day on February 17." Association presidents, beginning with Hannah Schoff, also promoted the February 17th observance, and in doing so, helped build its popularity among the states and local units.

From the earliest celebrations, an important part of each Founders Day has been the voluntary offering of monetary gifts by local units to help national and state congresses expand the PTA's outreach.



Tree planting became one of the more popular activities connected with celebrating Founders Day, as pictured in this 1933 ceremony.



The Second International Congress on the Welfare of the Child, Washington, D. C., will be held

April 25—May 2, 1911

Under Auspices of

The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations

PARENTS TEACHERS STATESMEN CLERGYMEN

are responsible for the quality of the men and women of the next generation.

Children are born with infinite possibilities for good or evil.

The Home, School, Church and State have a clear, definite responsibility in giving to every child the opportunity to develop physically, mentally and spiritually under influences favorable to all his needs.

America owes it to the children to make their welfare of primary importance. America's future as a nation will be great or small as she meets this question which is the basis of civic and social life.

Child Nurture is a mission.

The Department of Agriculture has done wonders in showing the value of science in farming, increasing the quality and the amount that can be produced on an acre of land.

The Culture of Childhood in the light of science will raise the standards of the race. Fatherhood and Motherhood of this century must equip the children to do their work in the world better than it has been done before.

Infant mortality is preventable. Crime is preventable. Corruption in politics is preventable.

Parents—Teachers—Clergymen—Statesmen, the welfare of the children of to-day is in your keeping.

Every Association or Individual who sees in the Child the Hope of the Race is cordially invited.

The Arlington Hotel will be headquarters. The CHILD WELFARE MAGAZINE will publish details each month. For information write Mrs. Arthur A. Birney, Cor. Sec., 806 Loan & Trust Building, Washington, D. C.

The official announcement for the Second International Congress on the Welfare of the Child in Washington, DC, 1911.

Belgium. When the U.S. Bureau of Education moved ahead to create the division, Mrs. Schoff was named director (while continuing to fulfill her national congress duties) and Mrs. Arthur A. Birney (sister-in-law of Alice Birney) assistant director. The PTA collaborated on the project for six years until the division became a separate government agency in 1919.

The relationship between the National PTA and the federal government continued to improve with the 1912 election of former college professor Thomas Woodrow Wilson to the presidency of the United States. As president, the former educator would—at the very least—be philosophically sympathetic to an agenda that proclaimed the importance of the nation's children and youth.

However, real groundbreaking came in 1913 when the National Education Association's Department of Superintendence (later to spin off as the American Association of School Administrators) officially supported the efforts of the National PTA to form its units in local schools throughout the country. By working closely with the National Education Association (NEA) through annual joint conferences, the PTA was able to publicize and explain its aims to school administrators nationwide.

This relationship was crucial because it created broad support for parent-teacher associations within school systems and the communities they served. This, in turn, opened the door to the formation of more local units. Through joint conferences with NEA, National PTA membership began to grow at geometric rates, passing 100,000 by 1916.

Yet despite the boom in member numbers, the financial cupboard of the country's only child-welfare association was fairly bare. Mrs. Schoff found that she must spend more and more hours developing the funds to keep the association afloat. It was time for new action.

ST. LOUIS N. C. M.
WELCOME
1912

This 16th annual convention pin sports a photo of one of the beautiful children the congress represented.

In search of financial stability

The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations often found that its dreams for the future were more ambitious than the funding available to attain them.

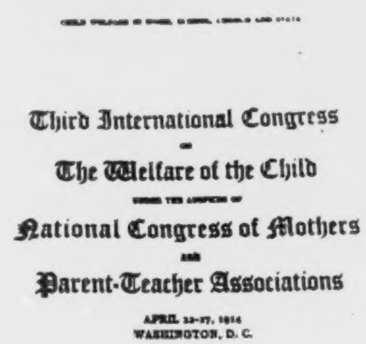
In the association's earliest days, Phoebe Hearst personally funded a good deal of its expenses. Later, other association leaders continued this tradition by giving out-of-pocket to help fund a special project or guide the association through a particularly tough time. In addition to generous financial donations, these leaders gave of their time as well as the use of their own homes for meetings and archives storage.

Despite such generosity, the association's finances were always strained if not in fiscal crisis. Mrs. Schoff knew this was not an efficient way to run any association of any significance, and she made a series of appeals to the membership to help her on two fronts: to increase the current funding so services and initiatives on behalf of the nation's children could be expanded, and to find ways to plan for a stable financial future.

At times it must have seemed that meeting these goals would require a financial "angel." Then, in 1915, Mrs. Schoff found a benefactor in Mrs. George K. Johnson, who made a significant gift to establish an endowment fund for the National PTA. Her example led to several other large donations, followed by a cascade of smaller gifts. By the end of the decade, Hannah Schoff could take satisfaction in knowing the association had both resources and reserves to meet its commitments and weather the occasional storm.

Thanks to these contributions and a growing membership, the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations was now in a financial position to help where it was needed.

That secure position proved critical as the nation entered its own crisis in 1917.



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Third International Congress

ON

The Welfare of the Child

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

National Congress of Mothers

AND

Parent-Teacher Associations

APRIL 22-27, 1914
WASHINGTON, D. C.

As major world powers became embroiled in war, the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations and other like-minded organizations convened the Third International Congress on the Welfare of the Child.

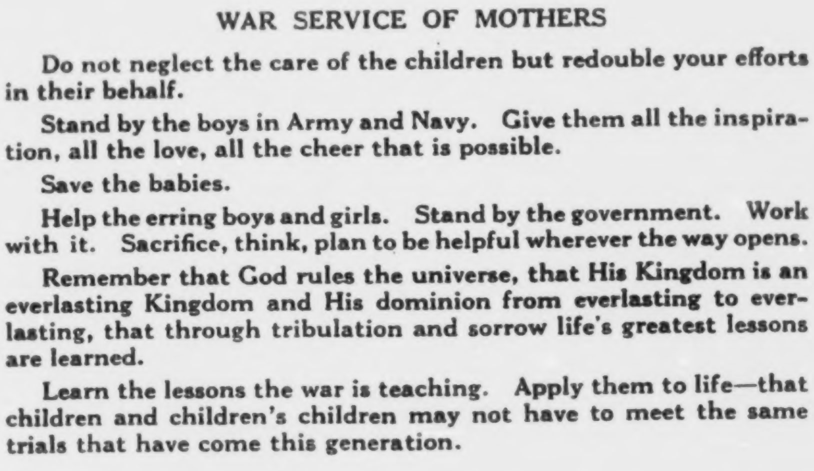
The World War I years

Few Americans were unduly alarmed by the headlines of June 28, 1914: Austrian Duke Franz Ferdinand had been assassinated on the streets of Sarajevo by a Serbian anarchist named Gavrilo Princip. But by August all of America was taking notice.

Entangled European alliances had triggered the war they were intended to prevent. Within three years, even the United States would enter "the war to end all wars"—a war that, due to modern technology, would prove more brutal and bloody than the most pessimistic estimates.

World War I would end in 1918, with 8.5 million dead and 21 million wounded, only to sow the seeds of World War II. But that was in the future. In 1914, all that Hannah Schoff and the National PTA membership knew of this war was that young people would be dying—and that the attention of the nation would be turned to events half a world away.

With this realization, the members of the National PTA kept focused on activities to make the United States a better place for its young people. During 1916, while Woodrow Wilson was running for re-election to "make the world safe for democracy," the National PTA issued its own list of priorities. These included the construction of fire escapes and automatic sprinklers in schools, expansion of juvenile offender rehabilitation programs, and the establishment of an effective method to monitor and censor motion pictures. (See "Monitoring the Media and the Message," p. 96.)



WAR SERVICE OF MOTHERS

Do not neglect the care of the children but redouble your efforts in their behalf.

Stand by the boys in Army and Navy. Give them all the inspiration, all the love, all the cheer that is possible.

Save the babies.

Help the erring boys and girls. Stand by the government. Work with it. Sacrifice, think, plan to be helpful wherever the way opens.

Remember that God rules the universe, that His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom and His dominion from everlasting to everlasting, that through tribulation and sorrow life's greatest lessons are learned.

Learn the lessons the war is teaching. Apply them to life—that children and children's children may not have to meet the same trials that have come this generation.

Announcements such as this one appeared in the *Child Welfare Magazine* during the war years.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS
THE HERMITAGE
NASHVILLE
APRIL 4-9
1916

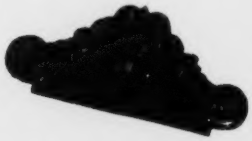
Button honoring the National Congress of Mothers meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1916.

The 1916 convention delegation, convened in Nashville, Tennessee, also recommended that foreign-born mothers should learn English immediately upon arrival in the United States to better provide an adequate home environment for their children.

At the convention, Hannah Schoff also warned members of the new challenges they would face at war's end, when millions of children would be left fatherless by the war in Europe.

In 1917, the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations turned 20 years old. To commemorate the observance, the association commissioned a 42-page pamphlet titled *Twenty Years' Work for Child Welfare*. This booklet described the association's many accomplishments in the two decades that had passed since Alice Birney fretted over whether 25 or 50 people would show up to the first meeting in Washington.

But now the association's future looked even brighter than its past. The concentrated effort to establish new chapters and units and bring the association's message of help and activism to as many of the nation's parents and teachers as possible—had worked. Membership had grown to an astonishing 122,000 by 1917.



1917 pin

When the United States went to war that year, the National PTA did what it could to help by establishing a service club for enlisted men in Philadelphia.

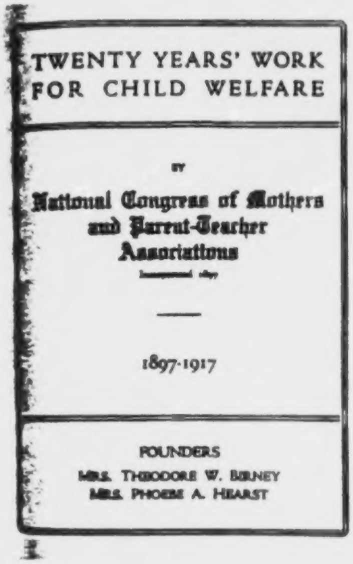
The following year the National PTA purchased a building at 1314 Massachusetts Avenue, in Washington, DC, which it used at first as a United Service Club for enlisted men. At war's end, the building was converted into the association's first national headquarters. But even then the building also continued to serve as a service club.

The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, now at its new Washington address, had come quite a distance from the days when the entire membership could fit into Phoebe Hearst's dining room.

The end of a war and the twilight of an administration

An armistice brought about an end to hostilities in Europe at 11:11 a.m., November 11, 1918. It was time to pursue domestic priorities.

During the war, many young people had dropped out of school to go to work, to help support families whose fathers and brothers had gone off to



TWENTY YEARS' WORK
FOR CHILD WELFARE

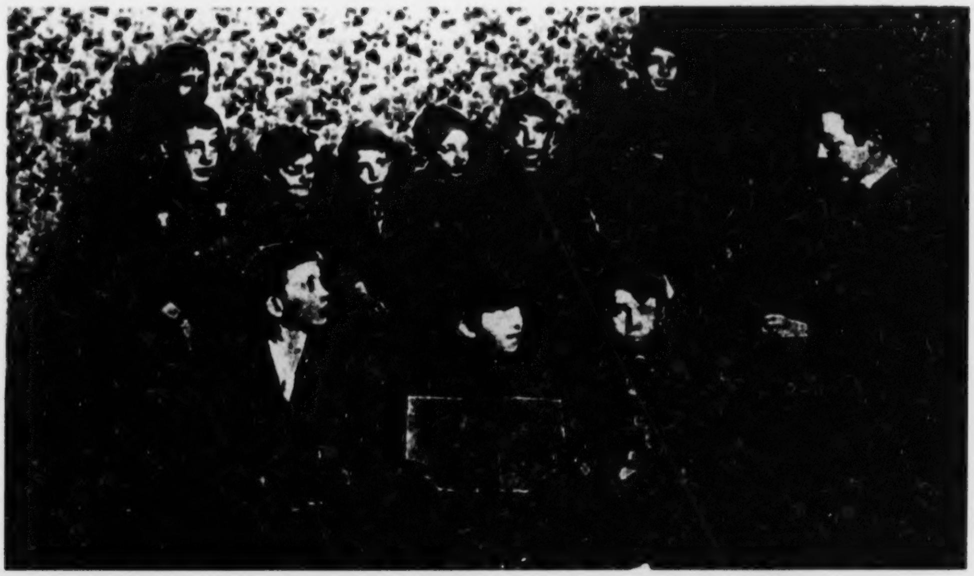
BY

National Congress of Mothers
and Parent-Teacher
Associations

1897-1917

FOUNDERS
MRS. THEODORE W. BIRNEY
MRS. PHOEBE A. HEARST

To commemorate the 20 year anniversary of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations in 1917, the association commissioned this 42-page pamphlet.



Due to the teacher shortage during World War I, mother-teachers held classes for children in their homes.

war. Now with the war over, the National PTA took the lead in calling for these young people to return to school.

In Hannah Schoff's "President's Desk" column in the October 1918 issue of the *Child Welfare Magazine*, she wrote of the problems facing schools and the teacher shortage following the war:

> In one rural county of Pennsylvania thirty-five schools could not open in September for lack of teachers. The same condition exists in all parts of the country...The future of the nation demands that no school shall remain closed because there are no teachers...In America today every Parent-Teacher Association should take as its slogan, "The schools shall not close. Teachers shall be kept, whatever the cost."...Even if mother-teachers are drafted to fill the need it is as truly a war service as one can give...When boys of fourteen can and do earn as much as is paid to teachers, when the many inducements for higher salaries in patriotic work are offered, the only way to keep the schools intact is to place teaching among the patriotic duties, and to increase the pay in the same ratio as has been done in every trade or profession.

The association also called for enhancing the career of teaching. The 1919 convention passed the following resolution:

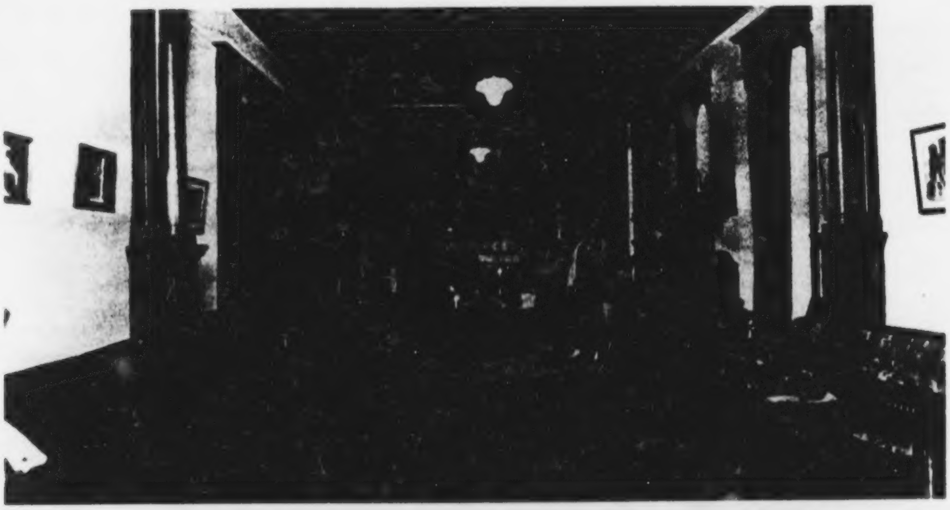
> *Whereas*, we are facing the greatest shortage of teachers known in the educational history of our country, and
> *Whereas*, this condition is primarily due to the low salaries of teachers,
> *Be it resolved*, that we use every means for advancing the salaries of teachers to such a degree that men and women of the highest type will choose the exalted profession of teaching, knowing that the inestimable service they are rendering will be commensurately paid.

The nation fought to return to normalcy following the devastating effects of World War I.

Meanwhile, in Georgia, a most important, although quiet movement began to extend the concerns for child welfare to all the nation's children, regardless of race. The inequity and inhumanity of legal segregation in the South led some highly motivated African-American women to form the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers.

Mrs. Henry (Selena Sloan) Rutherford Butler turned to the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations for help in expanding the Georgia Congress into a national forum. She received the association's immediate, ongoing, and generous assistance.

But as both groups and the nation sought a return to "normalcy" following World War I, unexpected changes were in the offing. Neither Hannah Schoff's presidency, nor Phoebe Hearst and her steadfast support, nor the stately new headquarters building on Massachusetts Avenue would remain with the National PTA in the Roaring '20s.



Home of the first national headquarters in Washington, DC. Originally used as a service club for enlisted men in World War I, the congress continued to use the building for that purpose, in addition to its use as an administrative office, until the war ended. Although congress work had increased a hundredfold, maintaining a building of such size (32 rooms) after the war seemed impractical, so the congress sold the building in the summer of 1920, and moved its offices to the National Education Association building in DC, where it remained until it moved to Chicago in 1938.

In 1919, the National PTA mourned the death of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, its "godmother," as Alice Birney had referred to her. Expressions of great loss arrived at the national office from PTAs around the country, including the following resolution from Phoebe's home state of California, composed by the Oakland Federation of Mothers' Clubs and Parent-Teacher Associations:

> *Whereas:* It has pleased Almighty God to call from our midst Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst; the "Eternal Mother" of the twentieth century....a mother of deeds, not words; true to the children...She lived a life for others, and laid a foundation that will stand as a monument to her memory forever. To her untiring efforts and generous support, the great "Congress of Mothers," for the welfare of all children, sprang into existence...
>
> *Be it resolved*: That...to the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teachers, we...extend sympathy, through this our great loss and separation. May we strive to emulate the life and character of our sister of humanity....
>
> As the seasons come and go and our golden poppy—which symbolizes constancy—blooms, it will ever remind us of the beautiful and loyal life that has passed to the Great Beyond.

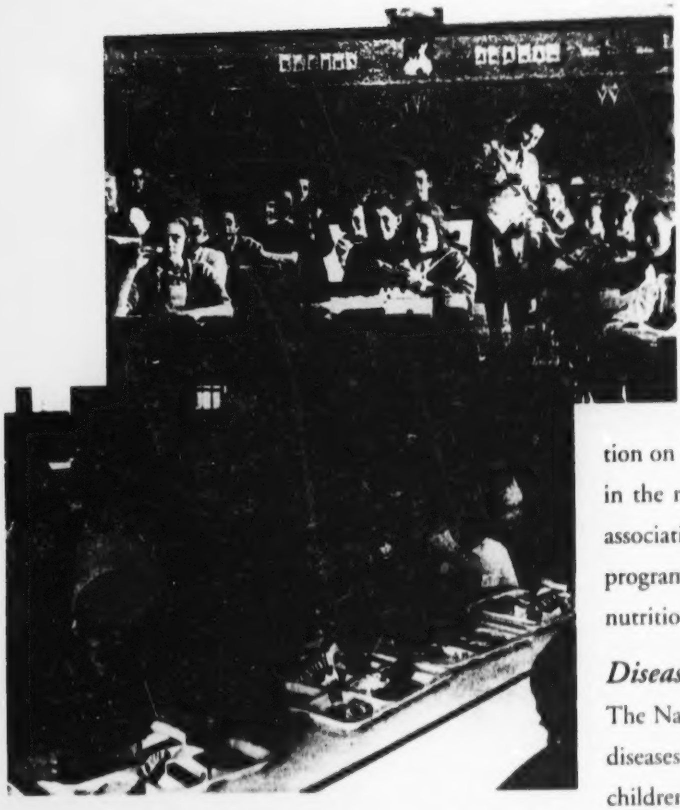
In 1919, the National PTA mourned the great loss of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, its "godmother," as Alice Birney had referred to her. Mrs. Hearst is pictured here with her five grandchildren.

FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN

One of the fundamental purposes of the National PTA has always been to preserve children's health and protect them from harm. As early as 1899, the National Congress of Mothers advocated for a national health bureau to provide families and communities with health information. Its sustained efforts bore fruit when the Children's Bureau was established in 1912 as a part of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Nutrition

Children's nutrition has been a major health concern that the association has had to address repeatedly since its earliest days. In 1906, the PTA advocated for the passage of the Pure Food Bill, which would revolutionize our nation's food industry. Persistent efforts by the PTA and other such groups brought about the bill's passage under the name of the 1906 Food and Drug Act. Amendments passed in 1938 and 1962 strengthened the original act and expanded the powers of the federal Food and Drug Administration. The association first called for "printed information on food values" on packaged food in 1933. And its involvement in the meals served to school children continues to this day as the association fights against budget cuts that threaten federal nutrition programs which daily provide millions of children with their only nutritious meals.



PTA was a driving force behind the start of the federal school lunch program back in 1946 and continues lobbying for its necessity in schools today.

Disease Prevention

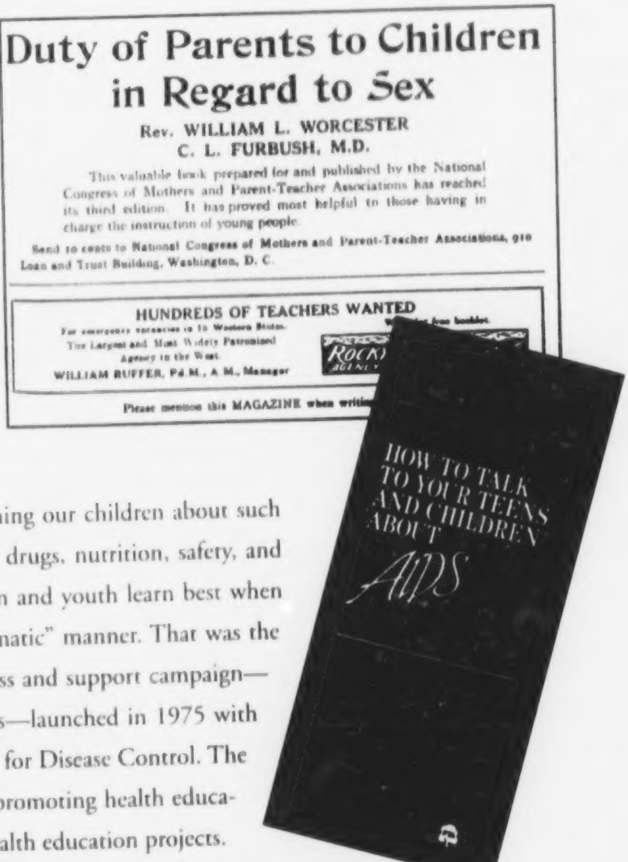
The National PTA has devoted great energy to halting the spread of diseases and to improving other health conditions that have affected children. One principal concern was tuberculosis, the target of PTA projects from 1908 through 1939. Another was infant mortality, which was first made a priority in 1908 when convention delegates passed a resolution declaring that "infant mortality is preventable" and that the "terrible death rate among infants can be checked in but one way...: by giving to every expectant mother the knowledge of what the baby needs in food, sleep, clothing, and care." Related resolutions in 1914 and 1915, concerned with the inadequate and unscientific care of mothers and infants and the "sorry state of obstetrics," kept the issue at the forefront. Then in 1921, the U.S. Congress passed the Sheppard-Towner Act, the first U.S. federally funded health care program. Its mandate was to reduce infant and maternal mortality and morbidity by establishing prenatal health centers where expectant mothers could be counseled on how to take care of themselves and their children.

The Summer Round-Up of the Children, begun in 1925, provided check-ups to identify health and dental problems in 5- and 6-year-olds entering school for the first time. Local PTA members served to "round up" community children for these examinations by physicians and dentists. For PTA as a whole, this was the main vehicle for immunizing children against different diseases. After a more than 25-year history, the Summer Round-Up "grew up" into the PTA Continuous Health Supervision program which introduced parents to the practice of getting their children periodic health examinations from birth onward. Many local and council PTAs not only informed the parents but also worked with community health agencies to provide the necessary services.

One of the most high-profile projects in the PTA's history was its participation in the field testing of the Salk polio vaccine in the 1950s, for which it won praise from the health agencies it assisted in this effort.

Sex Education

Ever since a paper on the subject was read at the first National Congress of Mothers convention, the association has advocated sex education be taught to children before they reach puberty, in order to decrease teen pregnancies and fight the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. This concern took on a new urgency with the onset of HIV and AIDS-related diseases in the 1980s. Here again the PTA joined forces with major health agencies—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and, most recently, the American School Health Association—in working to prevent the spread of HIV, help schools develop policies to deal with HIV-infected students, and build parent and community awareness.



Duty of Parents to Children in Regard to Sex

Rev. WILLIAM L. WORCESTER
C. L. FURBUSH, M.D.

This valuable book prepared for and published by the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations has reached its third edition. It has proved most helpful to those having in charge the instruction of young people.

Send 10 cents to National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, 910 Loan and Trust Building, Washington, D. C.

HUNDREDS OF TEACHERS WANTED

For emergency vacancies in 15 Western States.
The Largest and Most Widely Patronized Agency in the West.
WILLIAM RUFFER, Pd.M., A. M., Manager

for free booklet.

Please mention this MAGAZINE when writi

The PTA has encouraged parents to educate their children about sexuality as a preventive measure to sexual experimentation and its accompanying dangerous consequences as seen from an ad published in the December 1916 *Child-Welfare Magazine* (top) and an AIDS brochure published today (bottom).

For many years, the National PTA has pointed out that teaching our children about such life-important topics as sex, HIV and AIDS, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, nutrition, safety, and responsible behavior cannot be a "one-shot" discussion. Children and youth learn best when these lessons are taught in a "sequential, coordinated, and systematic" manner. That was the educational method promoted in the PTA's community awareness and support campaign—Comprehensive School/Community Health Education Programs—launched in 1975 with a grant from the Bureau of Health Education within the Centers for Disease Control. The campaign motivated 20 state PTAs to submit written plans for promoting health education and several state governments to allocate funds to initiate health education projects.

In the 1990s, a similar campaign, now called Healthy Children, Successful Students: Comprehensive School Health Programs, focuses on schools as the most reasonable place to centralize health education and health services. The campaign aims to establish planned and sequential quality school health education for K–12th-grade students, promote healthy student lifestyles and decision making, and improve access to health services through family, school, and community partnerships.

Tobacco & Alcohol Education

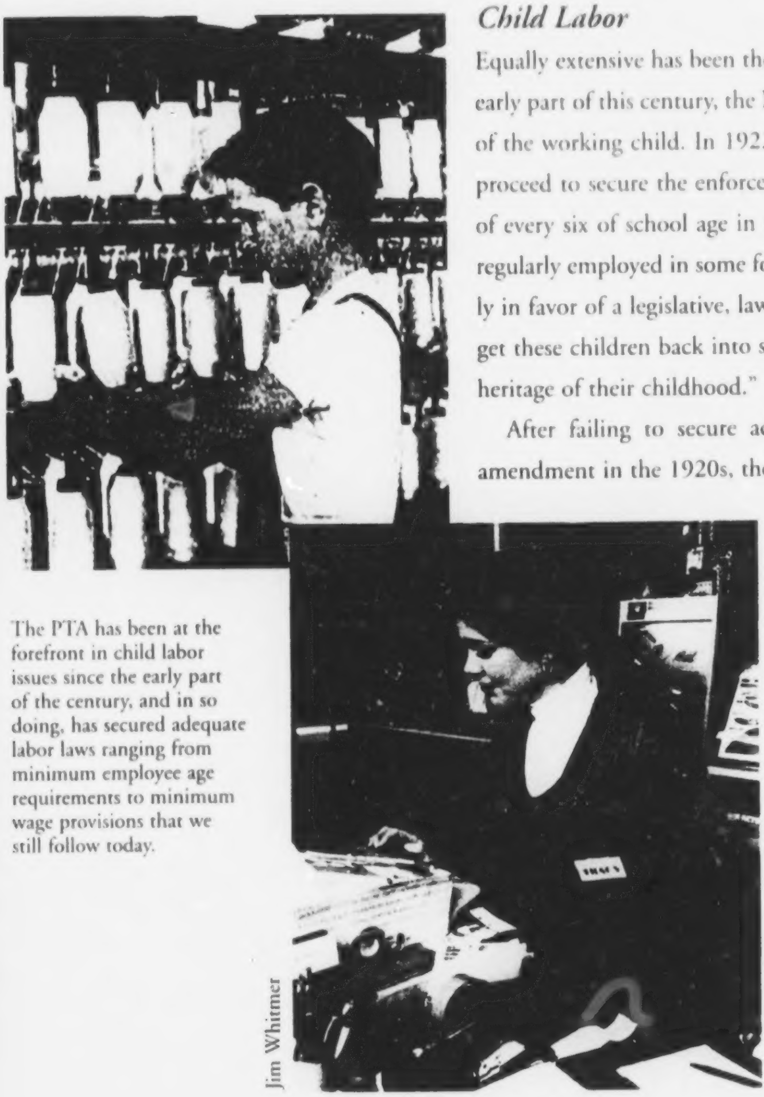
The National PTA has consistently condemned the promotion and sale of tobacco and alcohol to minors. The organization passed its first resolution urging members to help eliminate smoking by minors in 1926. In the mid-1960s, the PTA made a further push to enlighten the public on the health consequences of smoking by launching a project in cooperation with the U.S. Public Health Service. Currently the PTA has joined the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a national effort to reduce tobacco use among children and teens.

In the 1970s, with support from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the PTA educated families regarding alcohol abuse. The early 1980s found the PTA spearheading the new National Coalition for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse; following that, in 1985, the PTA membership voted to devote one week in March each year to making people aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

Child Labor

Equally extensive has been the PTA's work to make children's lives safer. From the early part of this century, the National Congress of Mothers championed the cause of the working child. In 1922, the PTA urged all state branches to "energetically proceed to secure the enforcement of child labor laws. Knowing…that one child of every six of school age in the United States is not enrolled in any school, but regularly employed in some form of gainful occupation, we go on record as actively in favor of a legislative, law-enforcement and child-welfare program which will get these children back into schools, protect their health, and restore to them the heritage of their childhood."

After failing to secure adequate child labor laws through a constitutional amendment in the 1920s, the PTA turned, in 1933, to its state branches to work for child labor standards that required no less than a basic minimum age of 16 for employment, a higher minimum age for employment in hazardous occupations, and minimum wage provisions for minors. By 1954 most states had passed laws with these provisions and the PTA had shown its resilience to setbacks and its know-how for working at all policy-making levels for crucial child-related laws and regulations.

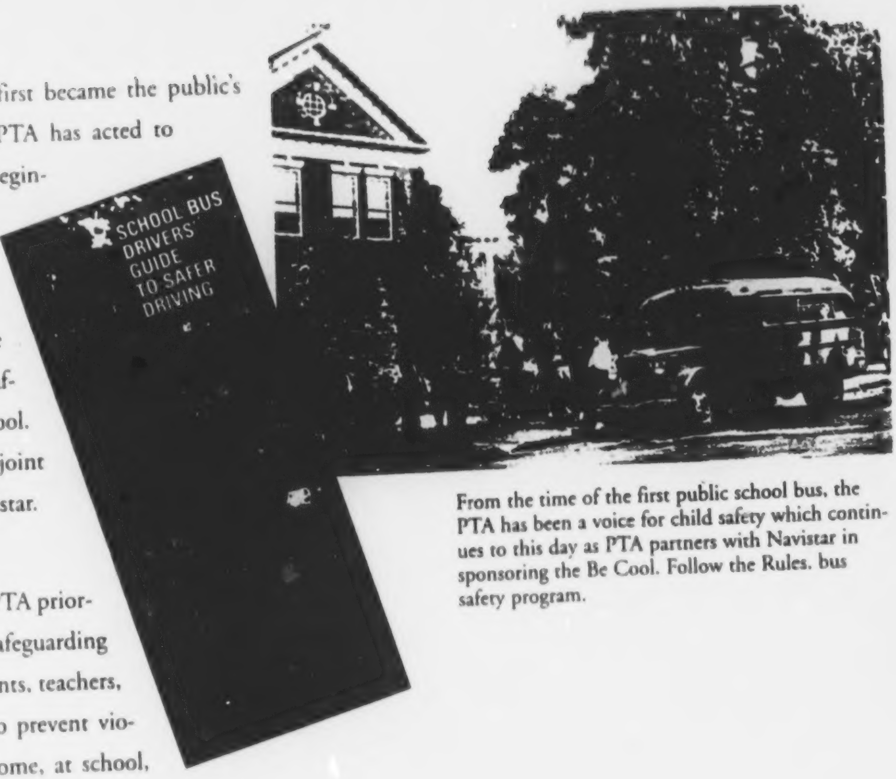


The PTA has been at the forefront in child labor issues since the early part of the century, and in so doing, has secured adequate labor laws ranging from minimum employee age requirements to minimum wage provisions that we still follow today.

Jim Whitmer

Transportation Safety

Since the days when the automobile first became the public's favored mode of transportation, the PTA has acted to improve children's safety in traffic, beginning with a traffic safety education project in 1936. From seat belts to bicycle helmets to roller sport safety equipment, the PTA has called for the highest standards of safety. A major traffic safety effort today is the Be Cool. Follow the Rules. bus safety project, a joint project of the National PTA and Navistar.



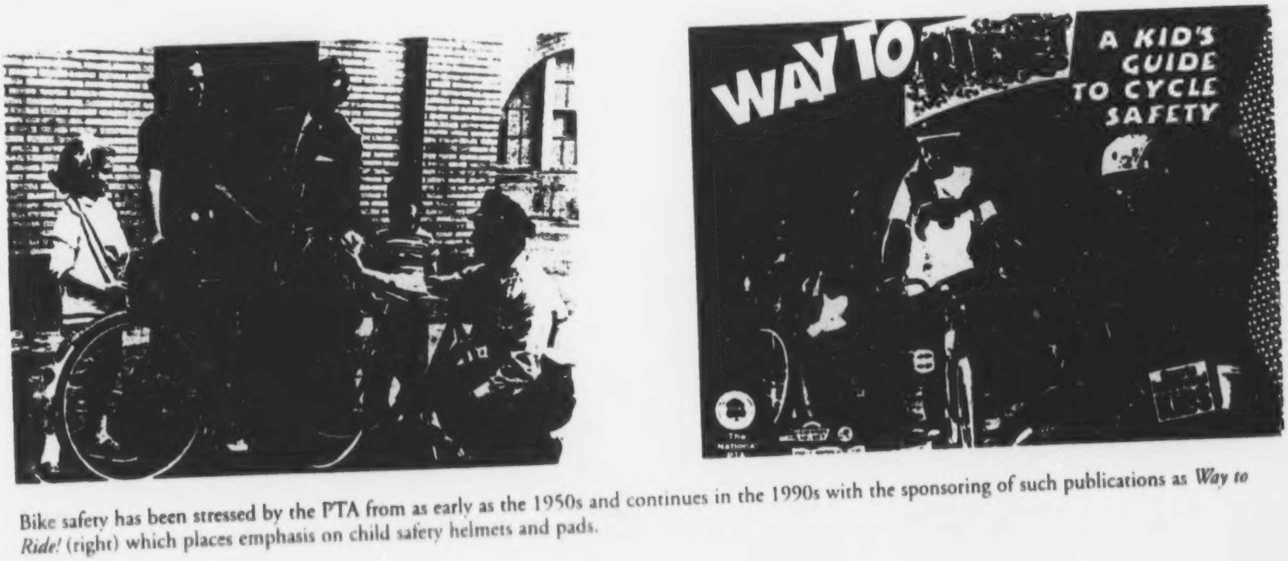
From the time of the first public school bus, the PTA has been a voice for child safety which continues to this day as PTA partners with Navistar in sponsoring the Be Cool. Follow the Rules. bus safety program.

Today's Concerns

Child protection remains a National PTA priority today. The recently developed Safeguarding Your Children program educates parents, teachers, and community members on how to prevent violence to and among youth in the home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

The PTA's concern to secure all-round healthy living conditions recently led to a new environmental project in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Its purpose is to raise awareness of environmental health hazards and their potential effects on children and families.

Just as they have since the association's founding, the members of the PTA monitor society's changing conditions to identify, curb, and eliminate potential health and safety threats wherever there are children.



Bike safety has been stressed by the PTA from as early as the 1950s and continues in the 1990s with the sponsoring of such publications as *Way to Ride!* (right) which places emphasis on child safety helmets and pads.

1920–1929

It's fair to say that the innocence of the pre-war United States was lost to the horrors of World War I. With the war ended, Americans wanted respite—a return to "normalcy," which, in retrospect, proved an elusive dream. The war forever shattered many comfortable beliefs, and left in its wake a looser, uncharted world that made many Americans profoundly uncomfortable.

The discipline of the war years gave way to the pursuit of personal pleasure by many disillusioned young adults. Unfortunately, the Roaring '20s, which ensued, would end not with a whimper but with the bang of a cataclysmic economic disaster—the Great Depression.

The response of the National PTA was to combat the perceived decadence with moral and spiritual education courses, movie reviews, advocacy of parent responsibility for the health and education of their children, and the promotion of active measures to prevent and treat childhood diseases.

An original National Congress of Parents and Teachers pin depicting the newly adopted oak tree symbol.

A changing of the guard

By 1920, Hannah Schoff had been president of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations for 18 years—since Alice Birney's resignation in 1902. Alice and Phoebe were gone; Hannah was growing weary—the end of an era was at hand.

During Mrs. Schoff's administration, membership climbed 400 percent, and state branches increased from 8 to 37. Local PTA units broadened in scope to include not only mothers' study groups but also parent-teacher associations, creating an important link between home and school. The association found its financial footing and a headquarters building to call home. Its

Opposite page: Tree planting became one of the important ceremonies associated with the National Congress of Mothers' Founders Day ceremony.

membership labored for the passage of federal bills and the creation of governmental agencies intended to protect and nurture children and families. Then to communicate its mission and activities, the association began publishing a magazine.

Hannah Schoff now looked forward to a well-deserved retirement. It was time for a changing of the guard.

Katharine Chapin Higgins, president, National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, 1920–1923

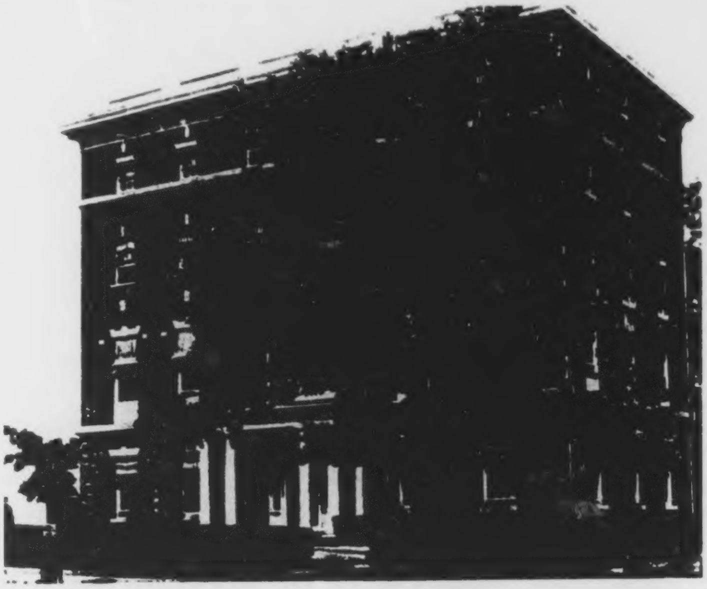
A surprise choice

At the 1920 convention, Katharine Chapin Higgins—at age 73—was elected president of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. She had been present at the founding of both the National Congress of Mothers and the Massachusetts state branch, in which she had been active. She also spent considerable time touring the nation—usually at her own expense.

Continuing the tradition of her two predecessors, she embarked on a virtual nonstop national tour, making 80 separate forays out of Washington during the three years of her administration.

One of her first tasks was to sell the original headquarters building on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington and put the money to other uses for the members. For the next 18 years, the National PTA rented office space from the National Education Association at 1201 Sixteenth Street N.W. in the nation's capital.

Part of Mrs. Higgins' legacy was to streamline the organization's structure. She accomplished this in part by realigning the state branches into 14 geographic regions and by combining committees into departments: Public Welfare, Education, Home Service, Health, and Organization and Efficiency, each headed by a national vice president.



The congress leased office space in the National Education Association building in the nation's capital for 18 years.

The 1920s

U.S. presidents: Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover

Headlines: League of Nations is formed; The 19th Amendment gives U.S. women the right to vote; Mussolini forms fascist government in Italy; Ku Klux Klan activities explode into violence throughout South; Soviet states form USSR; U.S. bill limits immigration, prohibits all Japanese; Hitler publishes Mein Kampf; Stock market crashes; J. Edgar Hoover appointed director of Bureau of Investigation; Chas. Lindbergh flies nonstop New York to Paris in 33.5 hours; Babe Ruth hits 60 home runs for New York Yankees; Amelia Earhart first woman to fly across Atlantic; Construction begins on Empire State Building

Daily life: First U.S. birth control clinic opens in New York; Time magazine and The New Yorker publish their first issues; Charleston becomes national dance craze; Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin; U.S. population: 106 million; Average income: $1,487; Average public school teacher's income: $1,393; Average home: $7,019; Loaf of bread: 10¢; Gallon of gas: 31¢; Refrigerator:$56.95

Movies: Metropolis, The Gold Rush, first Mickey Mouse cartoons, "talkies" replace silent films

Books: Ulysses, A Passage to India, An American Tragedy, The Sun Also Rises, Winnie the Pooh, Lady Chatterley's Lover, The Sound and the Fury, A Farewell to Arms, Look Homeward Angel

Art & music: Louis Armstrong in Chicago; Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue; First records of Duke Ellington appear; Revel's Bolero

On Broadway: Show Boat

Popular songs: Tea for Two, My Blue Heaven, Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella, Makin' Whoopee, Sonny Boy, Stardust, Singin' in the Rain

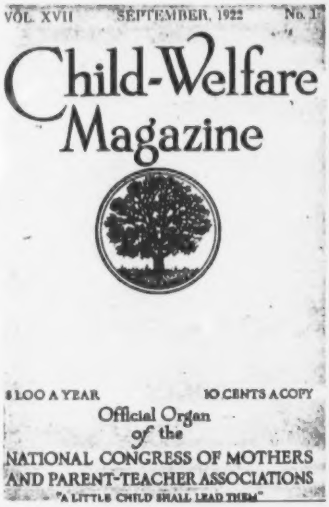
Radio: Nation's first station KDKA (Pittsburgh) begins transmitting first regular programs

What's new? Good Humor, Baby Ruth, Thompson submachine gun (Tommy gun), self-winding wristwatch, insecticides

The association's publication, *Child Welfare Magazine*, was revamped and placed on a more professional footing with the addition of an editorial board. That board appointed as editor Margaretta Willis Reeve—who would become president of the association at the end of Mrs. Higgins' term.

The National PTA adopted the oak tree as its symbol in October 1922. The PTA brochure *Looking to Our Roots* gave the following explanation for its selection:

> The oak tree first appeared as an emblem of the National PTA in September 1922, on the cover of *Child Welfare Magazine*. The magazine's editor, Margaretta Reeve, compared the association to a tree: It began as a national organization, or main trunk, and, like a tree, grew branches (state PTAs) and smaller shoots (local PTAs) that drew life from the parent stem. The [association] was best represented by the oak, with "its sturdy heart, its usefulness in building, its broad protecting shadow, the acorns which perpetuate its life."
>
> In October, the board of managers recommended a golden oak tree on a blue background as a suitable design for the congress's pin. Thus did the oak tree become the official symbol of the National PTA.



VOL. XVII SEPTEMBER, 1922 No. 1

Child-Welfare
Magazine

$1.00 A YEAR 10 CENTS A COPY

Official Organ
of the
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS
AND PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS
"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM"

A revamped *Child Welfare Magazine* features the newly-adopted symbol of the congress—an oak tree.

A silver anniversary

The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations celebrated 25 years of accomplishment at the 1922 convention held in Tacoma, Washington. That year, the organization adopted a slogan, "A PTA in Every School," which would serve as a nationwide association goal. At the quarter-century mark, association members were staying the course set by the founders: seeking to make the world a better place for children, which meant, among other things, calling for wider adoption of preschool programs and attention to the needs of the high school students.

The National Congress board of managers celebrates 25 years of congress work at its convention in Tacoma, Washington, in 1922.

Twenty-five years after its founding, the congress continued to advocate for this country's children, as witnessed by its call for formalized preschool programs.

Along with its goal to link more PTA units to schools, the national association worked to extend its movement into Central and South America. High on its list was continued assistance to Selena Sloan Butler in her efforts to build the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers into a National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers.

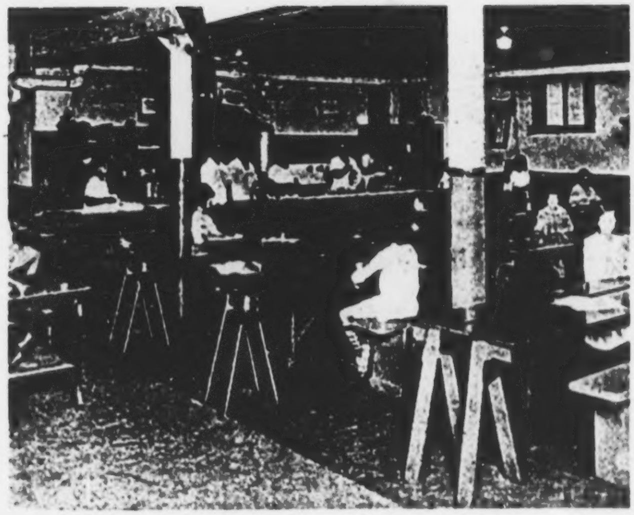
Katharine Higgins could not ignore the national malaise still lingering after the war. With the good of the children ever present in her thoughts, she called the growing association to action:

> Now is the time for the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations to show its energy, its power, its life...Fathers and mothers should know their children's world, be quick to discern outside influences and by anticipation and sympathy keep abreast of their children's interest. This means that parents should know the teachers of their children and should cultivate their friendship.

Mrs. Higgins was not the only mother concerned by the social drift that started after the war. An increase in juvenile delinquency was exacerbated by perceived declining moral standards. The Committee on Better Films tried to combat this by publishing monthly lists of approved motion pictures.

During this period, Katharine Higgins and the membership made clear and unmistakable calls for adequate sex education both in the school and in the home. They specifically underscored the importance of the home as the primary location for moral and spiritual education and development of children.

Other resolutions called for increased teacher pay and school lunch programs. These were accompanied by advocacy for improved and regular physical education for all children in all the nation's schools.



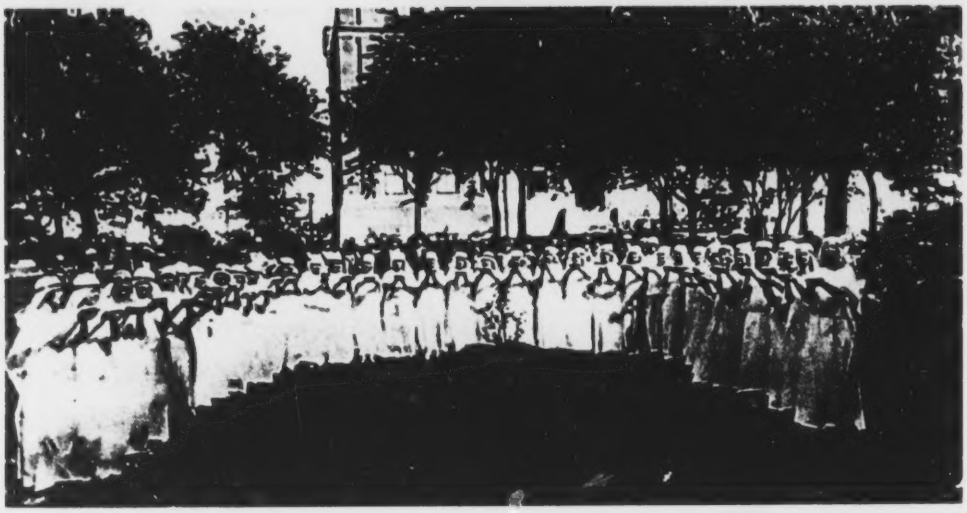
The '20s saw the national congress continuing to advocate for a school lunch program.

Patterned progress

In 1923, Margaretta Willis Reeve, former editor of *Child Welfare Magazine*, succeeded Katharine Higgins as president of the National PTA. In taking up the reins of a thriving organization of national importance, her administration immediately began to clarify its goals and mold its future. To do this Mrs. Reeve unveiled the following organizational objectives:

- All-the-year-round parenthood
- The things of the home brought back to the home
- An educated membership
- Interpretation of the value of education to the American people
- The promotion of law observance
- Trained leadership

Margaretta Willis Reeve, president, National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, 1923–1928



Mrs David O. Mears

Above: A 1923 convention ribbon belonging to Mrs. Mears, the originator of Founders Day.

Above left: Forty-three state PTA presidents ceremoniously plant an oak tree on the grounds of the state capitol in Austin, Texas, following the 1925 National PTA Convention in Austin.

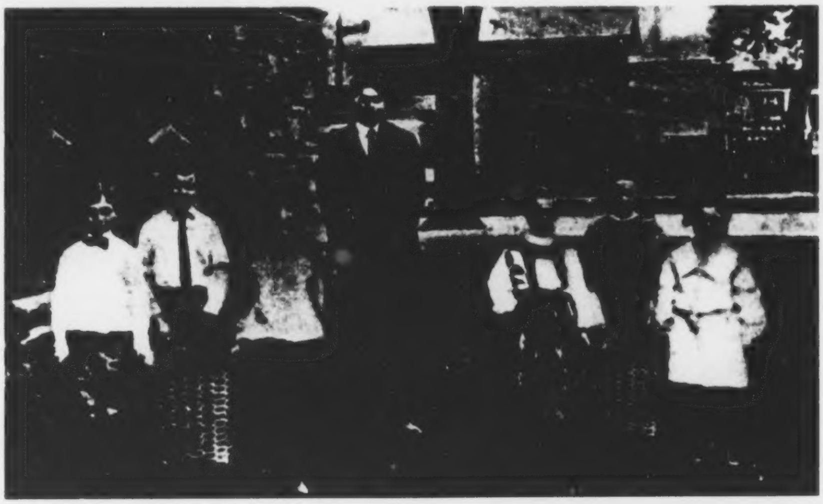
With goals clearly identified, one of the leadership's first moves was to adopt a new name that was less cumbersome and more descriptive of its purposes. At the 1924 convention, the membership voted to shorten the name of the organization to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The organization had the new name registered and began using it in 1925. In a report to the convention, Margaretta Reeve said:

> In thousands of communities our associations are active throughout the 12 months of the year...We are bringing back to the home the things of the home, placing fairly and squarely upon the parents, not the blame, but the responsibility which is so rightly theirs; and nobly they are meeting the challenges.

The Summer Round-Up

Not too long ago, the children of the United States were at great risk from a wide assortment of diseases that are rarely a problem today. Some were called "childhood" diseases and included measles, mumps, whooping cough, and rubella. They were expected as part of the normal process of growing up, just as chicken pox today.

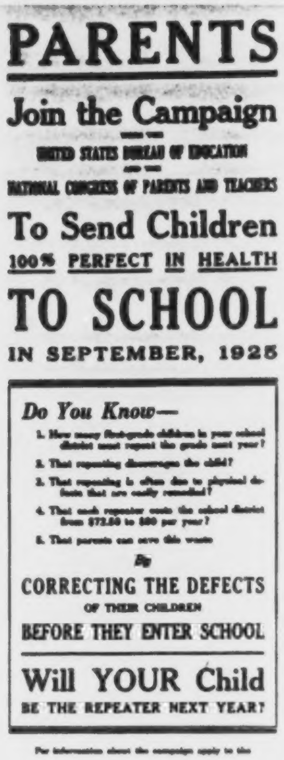
Once a child contracted the disease, he or she would usually pass it on to each brother and sister or classmates. Such illnesses would sweep through entire schools and communities.



To prevent the spread of such childhood illnesses as measles, mumps, and whooping cough, the PTA called for greater awareness of public sanitation, and schools organized "sanitation squads" as pictured above.

More serious illnesses such as influenza would often devastate entire families—children and adults alike.

Other deadly diseases such as polio, rheumatic fever, and smallpox would attack communities and impair children for life. Some children would even die.



PARENTS

Join the Campaign

WITH THE

UNITED STATES BUREAU OF EDUCATION

AND THE

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

To Send Children

100% PERFECT IN HEALTH

TO SCHOOL

IN SEPTEMBER, 1925

Do You Know—

1. How many first-grade children in your school district must repeat the grade next year?
2. That repeating discourages the child?
3. That repeating is often due to physical defects that are easily remedied?
4. That each repeater costs the school district from $72.50 to $80 per year?
5. That parents can save this waste

By

CORRECTING THE DEFECTS

OF THEIR CHILDREN

BEFORE THEY ENTER SCHOOL

Will YOUR Child

BE THE REPEATER NEXT YEAR?

For information about the campaign apply to the

Handbill announcing the Summer Round-Up program.

The combination of poverty and poor sanitation led to high child death rates among immigrant populations of the United States. For children living in big city tenements, the spread of a deadly disease could easily become epidemic.

In 1925, the PTA joined with the U.S. Bureau of Education to develop a means to communicate to parents nationwide the importance of preventive health care for children entering school in the fall.

It was during this period that Mrs. Reeve truly came into her own as a dynamic leader. Using the theme "Put Parent Power to Work," she launched what would become an annual campaign to get each 1st-grader-to-be registered and examined by a doctor and dentist, with appropriate medical and dental records filled out. The campaign worked with schools in storing this vital information.

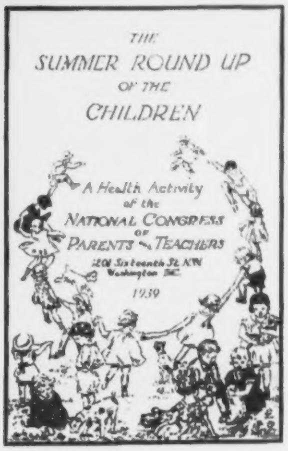
The resulting program was the Summer Round-Up of the Children. Its goal: to send each child to 1st grade free of remediable physical defects and illnesses.

The idea caught on. It won approval of medical authorities nationwide and was seen as a crucial contribution of the association to the health of a nation's children.

Far beyond providing a means to gather a standardized assessment of children's health, the Summer Round-Up of the Children forged a solid working relationship among the nation's parents, the teachers in the schools, the U.S. government, and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The campaign illustrated that schools could serve as locations for parents and teachers to work together in harmony for the protection and education of the children.

Children wait for their health check during the PTA's Summer Round-Up program, in which children about to enter 1st grade were checked for any remediable health problems.



THE
SUMMER ROUND UP
OF THE
CHILDREN

A Health Activity
of the
NATIONAL CONGRESS
OF
PARENTS AND TEACHERS
1201 Sixteenth St. NW
Washington D.C.

1939

Booklet cover charmingly depicts the PTA's childhood health campaign.

The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers

The roots of segregation were as much economic as racial. Following the Reconstruction at the end of the Civil War, many African-Americans had little choice but to live in impoverished isolation from the white mainstream.

Although African-Americans were now citizens of the nation, few could vote because of a poll tax that required citizens to pay for the right to vote. This practice effectively disenfranchised the poor—white and black alike.

By law, in the South, African-Americans were to be schooled in "separate but equal" facilities from whites. But in actuality, that arrangement usually created conditions more separate than equal.

African-American mothers realized that if conditions were bad for poor white children across the land, they were deplorable for black children.

Selena Sloan Butler, an African-American teacher and the wife of the prominent Atlanta physician, H.R. Butler, had followed the work of Alice Birney and Phoebe Hearst with great interest and started to work towards organizing a similar institution in Georgia for what was then called *colored* or *negro* parents.

She was determined to unite African-American mothers of the Atlanta community—and did so with the assistance and encouragement of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, which as early as 1908, had declared that its interest was in *all* children, irrespective of color or condition.

By 1911, Mrs. Butler had organized a group of mothers and teachers at the Yonge Street Elementary School in Atlanta. This first Colored Parent-Teacher unit followed the unit structure of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. Its work and mission won wide acclaim and support, and Mrs. Butler set out to respond to requests from around the state to establish similar chapters.

The Yonge Street Parent-Teacher Association was the first unit of the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, the precursor of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers.

Her work among Georgia's African-American communities was relentless. By 1919, virtually all of them had a local unit, and so in that year these units joined to form the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers.

While attending one of the early annual conventions of this new state congress, Margaretta Reeve, now president of the National PTA, addressed the delegates. Her zeal and support for the work of this new sister association attracted interest in developing parent-teacher work for both races in Alabama, Florida, and Delaware. According to the *Coral Anniversary History* of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, upon consulting with teachers and welfare workers from these states, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Reeve "deemed it logical to invite the organizations in these states into a national body, which would give opportunity for development of leadership among the members, as well as to create inspiration and deeper interest in the work and thereby accomplish greater results."

In early 1926, the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers issued a nationwide call to a convention to be held in Atlanta for the purpose of establishing a national association.

National PTA President Margaretta Willis Reeve lent her support to the vision of Selena Sloan Buter for a National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. The NCCPT was organized in 1926.

SELENA SLOAN BUTLER

Selena Sloan Butler, founder and first president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1926–1931

Wife, mother, teacher, organizer, publisher, world traveler, peacemaker, humanitarian, pioneer. These are just a few of the roles Selena Sloan Butler filled throughout her life. Concern for others' edification and well-being was the motivation for all that she did. She put opportunities for education within the reach of young and old alike.

After graduating from Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia, in 1888—in the college's second graduating class—Selena taught in the Atlanta Public Schools and then English at Florida State College. Just as Phoebe Hearst had embraced the Kindergarten movement and established kindergarten classes wherever she went, so too, did Mrs. Butler. She organized and taught society's youngest students at Morris Brown College, in Atlanta, and later in her own home.

For the benefit of adults, she worked as part of a corps of teachers, selected by the Atlanta Board of Education, to establish the community's first night school.

Even while living abroad in London, Selena remained active in education, through the Nursery School Association of Great Britain, of which the Duke of Gloucester was president. This work allowed her to visit schools along with officials of the organization and see firsthand what was being done for education internationally.

The Georgia and National Congresses of Colored Parents and Teachers were only two among many of Mrs. Butler's personal initiatives. She established and then, for several years, edited and published *The Woman's Advocate*, a monthly paper covering the news and issues of particular interest to African-American women. She was one of the organizers of the Atlanta Women's Club as well as a pioneer worker for the Phyllis Wheatly Young Women's Christian Association.

On May 7, 1926, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers (NCCPT) was formed. Selena Butler was elected its first president.

As explained in the *Coral Anniversary History*, the NCCPT was to function only in those states where separate schools for the races were maintained.

It was the individual state laws segregating schools, and not National PTA bylaws, that prevented African-American communities from belonging to the larger, older association. The National PTA had never excluded African-Americans nor any other minority from membership.

The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers functioned for more than four decades—until public schools were no longer legally segregated and the time seemed right for the two parallel associations to become one.

Part of Selena Sloan Butler's legacy was to work to expand educational opportunities for African-American women.

When the United States became embroiled in World War I, Selena worked to raise soldiers' morale as part of the entertainment group at Camp Gordon near Atlanta. She was also put in charge of the sale and distribution of War Savings Stamps and Certificates.

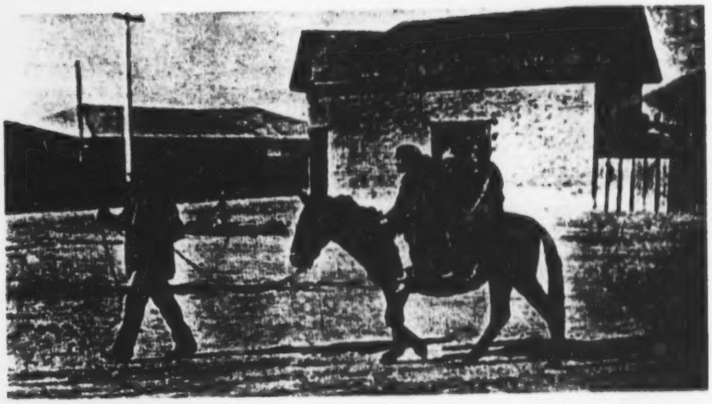
During World War II she was recruited by the Red Cross to head a small group of women attending soldiers at the 1,000-bed hospital at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Among the sick and wounded, she became affectionately known as "Mother Butler."

She was viewed as a "pioneer" in the movement to improve race relations during the period between the World Wars.

Her dedication to ensuring educational opportunities for African-Americans brought her recognition and an invitation from President Herbert Hoover to serve on his White House Conference on Child Health and Protection representing the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and on the Committee on the Infant and Pre-School Child.

Following Selena Sloan Butler's death in October 1964, Jewett Hitch, then president of the NCCPT, wrote the following:

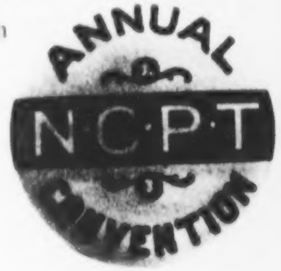
> We in the National Congress have lost a great leader; but we are the heirs of a rich legacy bequeathed to us by the energetic, intelligent...life of this pioneer for children. The children of our nation and our world find life more fruitful because their mothers and teachers became involved in a tangible way with this organization.



With the end of Mrs Reeve's term of office in 1928, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers had identified the needs of Native American and African-American children in urban and rural communities throughout the United States.

International extension

From various points around the world inquiries came about the National PTA's parent-teacher movement. Mrs. Reeve believed that other countries could benefit from similarly organized activities. This belief led to her appointment by the president of the World Conference of Education Associations as chair of an international committee to work on means to serve the international interest. The International Federation of Home and School quickly sprang from the committee's efforts. Its purpose: to bring together for conference and cooperation all those forces which function in home, school, and community—whether for the purposes of training parents or teachers or children—for the improvement of the conditions under which boys and girls of all ages live and work and play. At the first meeting in August 1927, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the delegates elected Mrs. Reeve as president, in recognition of the National PTA's increasing efforts to arouse interest in the world's children. The international federation met biannually from 1927 through 1937, after which, world conditions made it necessary to suspend further operations.

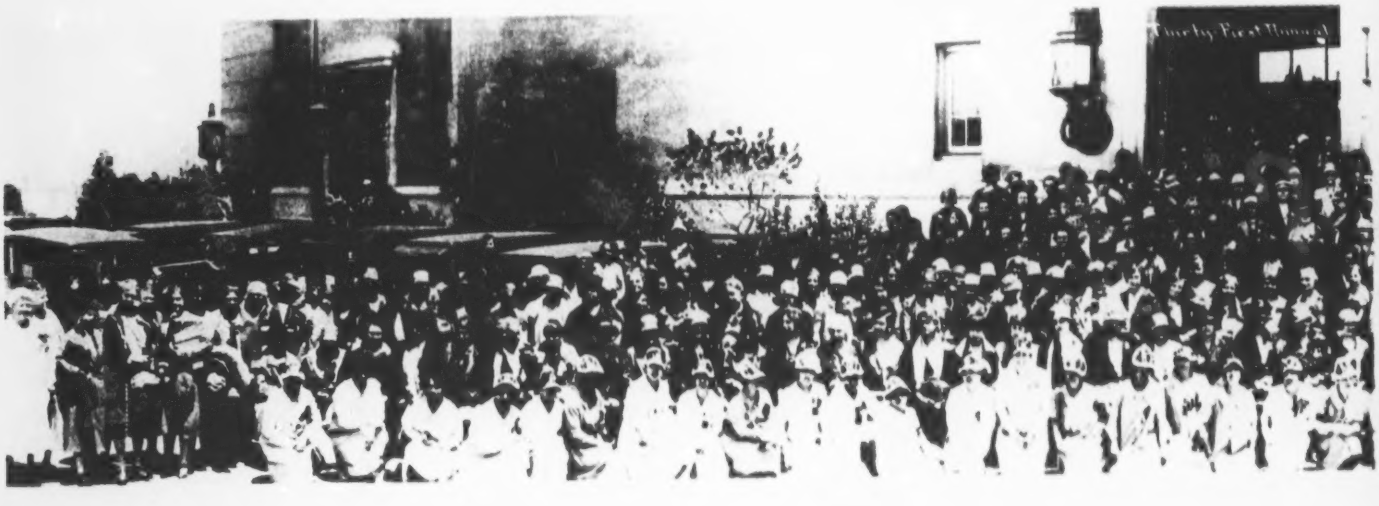


This 1927 convention button shows the abbreviated name that the congress adopted in 1925—N.C.P.T.—the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The seven objectives

In 1928, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers issued a statement of its collective hopes and beliefs for all the children of the United States. Adopted from a similar platform created by the National Education Association, the "Sevenfold Program of Home and School" was the theme of the PTA's national conven-

Below: The delegates from the 31st Annual National PTA Convention in Oakland, California, 1927.



tion held in Oakland, California, that year. The seven elements of the program were:

- Sound health
- Vocational effectiveness
- The wise use of leisure
- Ethical character
- Worthy home membership
- Mastery of the tools and techniques of learning
- Useful citizenship

The first of these objectives was linked to the already successful Summer Round-Up of the Children which proved to be a powerful boost to expanding the number of local PTA units.

The remaining six objectives were incorporated into PTA program materials for local units and became the subject matter of presentations and discussion groups as well as a reference for identifying the qualities needed to create a wholesome, nurturing environment for children.

By the close of Margaretta Willis Reeve's term of office, in 1928, the association had assumed a more manageable structure, adopted a clearer name, brought the count of organized state branches to 47, hired staff members to assist in organizing local units in schools, and entered the international scene on behalf of children. The organization also now paid specific attention to the needs of the African-American children in segregated schools, Native American populations in the West, and rural communities everywhere.

What could not be foreseen as Mrs. Reeve stepped down as president was the coming worldwide economic depression, and the appalling consequences it would have on the organization, the members, and, most important, the children for whom they worked so faithfully.

Transition to troubled times

When Ina Caddell Marrs took office as president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1928, the association was flourishing under the economic boom of the Roaring '20s.

The White House was occupied by Calvin Coolidge, successor to Warren Harding who had died in office.

Ina Caddell Marrs, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1928–1930

Coolidge was then elected president of the United States in his own right. He had stated that "the business of America is business." But for the PTA the real business of America was the education of parents and professionals about how best to help the children.

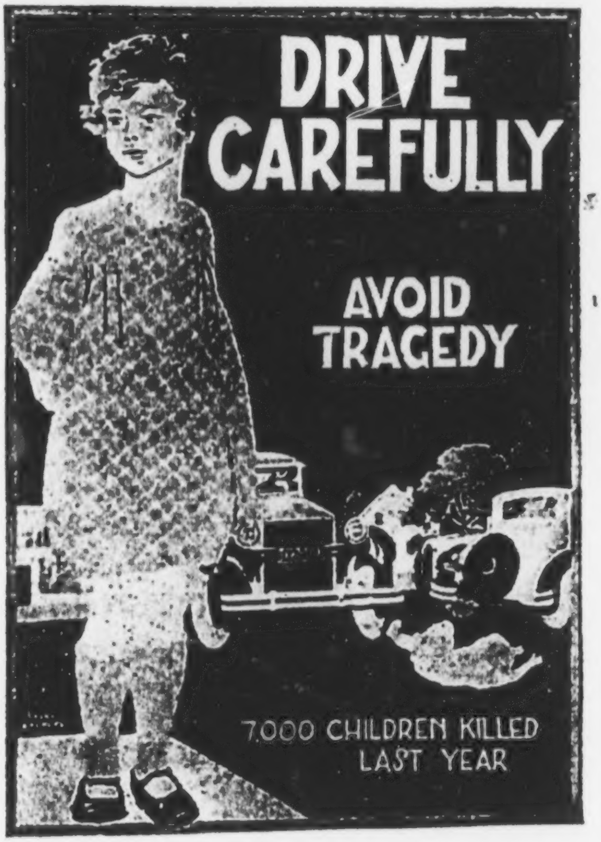
As from its founding, the bulk of the association's efforts were aimed at continuing and expanding educational opportunities for parents. But where earlier programs had dealt primarily with educating parents about children's health and early education issues, the new series of parent education activities was focused on child-raising techniques and strategies. A Bureau of Parent Education was created within the National PTA, and the association joined the National Council on Parent Education. Through this affiliation, the National PTA won a multi-year grant from the Laura Spelman Fund of the Rockefeller Foundation to develop a PTA parent education program. (See "Schooling Parents," p. 28.)

The *Parent Education Yearbook* was one result of that grant. It provided resources and materials for parents seeking a greater understanding of the needs of their children.

Delegates to the 1929 convention developed a code of ethics to guide the growing number of local units in how to raise funds ethically for their activities and how to identify appropriate projects to underwrite.

Two years after her election—at the May 1930 national convention of the PTA—Ina Caddell Marrs stepped down from the presidency. By now the membership had grown to more than a million and a half. While Mrs. Marrs left office with a sense of accomplishment, Herbert Hoover was struggling with an administration seriously affected by a worldwide economic depression.

The effects of the unprecedented economic emergency that began with the stock market crash of October 1929 were mounting. The next president of the National PTA would serve through the worst of days to come.



Poster advocating child pedestrian and automobile safety.

BE IT RESOLVED

National PTA convention delegates vote on a resolution, which, if passed, will become a part of the PTA's action plan for the year.

The resolutions passed annually at the National PTA Convention establish a platform for action for PTA work. The resolutions process is one area in which the PTA's democratic character can be seen most clearly, as any local, council, district/region, or state PTA can submit a resolution—providing the resolution meets certain criteria—for consideration by the full convention body at its annual meeting each year. Over the PTA's 100 years, hundreds of resolutions have been passed dealing with a myriad of issues, but all focusing on protecting and improving the lives of children.

At the first National Congress of Mothers meeting in February of 1897, nine resolutions were adopted. Three of those concerned the business of the organization, i.e., the location of its headquarters, the location of the annual meetings, and expressions of gratitude to all who made the first congress a success. The other six dealt with child and parenting issues such as advocating for mandatory public school kindergartens, approval of a National Training School for Women to learn parenting and homemaking skills, and advocating for quality public entertainment and quality in the news media.

The first resolutions committee of the Mothers Congress had a very short time to review incoming requests for action or advocacy, selecting those for action by the delegates that dealt directly with the work of the congress, namely that of parent education and childhood protection.

As the years progressed, formation of the resolutions and the process for submitting them became more formal. In the late 1960s, we read in the PTA Manual, the predecessor of the PTA Handbook, that resolutions must conform to the work of the PTA, be in harmony with its noncommercial, nonsectarian, nonpartisan policies, concern a matter that is national in scope, and present action that does not involve legislative action.

Kindergarten is now an integral part of public school programs in this country. The PTA was a pioneer in advocating for public school kindergartens, as manifested in a resolution adopted at the first convention of the National Congress of Mothers in 1897.

1930–1939

In 1930 there were 123 million Americans, 80 percent of whom lived in cities or towns. And more than 4 million were out of work—with the unemployment rate still climbing. In New York City alone, 6,000 men were on the streets selling apples to earn at least something to feed their families.

In the year following the October 1929 stock market crash, more than 1,300 banks failed, taking with them the hard-earned dollars that so many families had put aside for savings and emergencies.

This tortuous downward economic spiral would continue for the balance of the decade. People searched for a glimmer of hope. But the national mood was set by the dismal economic reality as Minnie B. Bradford, a native Californian and former school teacher, took the helm of the National PTA at the Denver convention in 1930.

Minnie B. Bradford, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1930–1934

Concerns about the children's health

Since its inception, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers had been successful in influencing the nation to improve and increase its tangible expressions of care and concern for its children. In the late 1890s, immigrant children often lived in miserable conditions, working eight, 10, or more hours per day, their childhood and schooling lost to poverty. By the 1930s—due at least in part to the concerted efforts begun back in the days of the National Congress of Mothers—child labor laws and national health initiatives had dramatically changed the lives of children for the better.

Opposite page: The depression threatened to undo whatever gains had been made by the National Congress of Mothers regarding child labor.

The 1930s

U.S. presidents: Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt

Headlines: Al Capone jailed; Breadlines form; Emergency Relief Appropriation Act authorizes $5 billion to create jobs; Lindbergh baby kidnapped; Prohibition repealed; Huey Long assassinated; Social Security Act becomes law; Spanish Civil War; Hitler, Mussolini proclaim Rome-Berlin Axis; European orders for war supplies stimulate U.S. economy; World War II begins in Europe

Daily life: First supermarket opens on Long Island; U.S. population: 123 million; Average income: $1,341; Average public school teacher's income: $1,367; Average home: $7,146; Loaf of bread: 4.8¢; Gallon of gas: 18¢; Refrigerator: $22.98

Movies: Grand Hotel; Shirley Temple movies, It Happened One Night, The Thin Man, Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, Gone with the Wind, The Wizard of Oz, Stagecoach

Books: Brave New World, Lost Horizon, How to Win Friends and Influence People, The Good Earth, Of Mice and Men, Finnegans Wake

Art & music: American Gothic, Guernica; Grandma Moses discovered; Grand Canyon Suite, Billy the Kid ballet

On Broadway: Anything Goes, Porgy and Bess

Popular songs: Body and Soul, Mood Indigo, Night and Day, Blue Moon, Pennies from Heaven, The Lady Is a Tramp, September Song

Radio: Burns and Allen, Jack Benny, Lone Ranger; Orson Welles' broadcast of War of the Worlds causes panic; FDR's fireside chats

What's new? Television's first images, Spam, Bird's-Eye frozen foods, Wonder Bread (first presliced bread), Hostess Twinkies, Betty Crocker, electric razor, Clairol hair products, Alka-Seltzer, parking meters, Zippo lighter, nylon, color film, automatic transmissions

The Great Depression in the United States saw children and youth moving into the labor market to help support their families, many of whom had been crippled by the hard economic times.

However, the Great Depression threatened to undo whatever gains had been made. As its impact widened, this economic catastrophe did its worst damage to the nation's children. Many were forced to leave school to help support their families. Those who found jobs were the lucky ones. At least they were eating. Too many other children were suffering from malnutrition—in the country that could boast the world's highest agricultural yield.

President and First Lady Hoover hosted a National Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1930. The three thousand delegates there in attendance recognized the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers for the years of meritorious service that both organizations had given the nation's children. Selena Sloan Butler, the latter group's president, was asked to chair the committee on The Infant and Pre-School Child.

A significant result of this conference was a document titled the *Children's Charter*, which held the following rights of childhood:

- Spiritual and moral training
- Understanding, love, and security
- Health protection and physical care from birth to adulthood
- A good home and a loving family
- Safe, properly equipped schools
- A wholesome community life
- An education based on individual needs
- Parents well trained for the job of parenthood
- Protection against physical hazards
- Specialized care if the child is handicapped
- Intelligent guidance if he or she should be delinquent
- An adequate standard of living

One of the tenants of the *Children's Charter* was specialized care for children with disabilities. Both the National Congress and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers had long supported this population of children and their families.

The board meeting preceding the 1931 National Congress of Parents and Teachers Convention in Hot Springs, Arkansas, discussed, among other things, how the congress would implement the convention theme, "The Challenge of the Children's Charter."

- Protection from exploitation
- Sufficient educational, recreational, and health facilities if he or she is a rural child

The Depression served to underscore how critical these rights were. At the 1931 annual convention—which carried the theme "The Challenge of the Children's Charter"—an introductory paragraph to a series of resolutions stated that the National PTA "recognize[d] the *Children's Charter* as a dynamic and concrete expression of [the National PTA's] fundamental objectives."

For the next two years, implementation of the charter's tenets became the driving theme of most state PTA conventions, with the underlying importance of parent understanding and education as the unifying thread. On the local PTA level, annual programs were based on the vision of the *Children's Charter*. The result was wider national awareness of the rights of childhood.

That awareness moved forward on several fronts. In 1931, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers passed several resolutions calling for improvements in segregated schools. Among them was a call for opportunities for African-Americans to assume leadership positions as superintendents, assistant superintendents, and board members in segregated school districts—which to this time had been controlled by white representatives—in order to protect the educational interests of all African-Americans in their communities.

Selena Butler (front row, 5th from left) and the board of managers of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers met in Washington, DC, in 1931 for its annual convention. Mrs. M.W. Blocker (front row right of Mrs. Butler) was elected president at this convention, succeeding Mrs. Butler. During this time, in addition to her work as president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Selena Butler was very active in the nursery school movement in the United States and abroad.

President Selena Butler was extremely active internationally during this period. She not only represented the organization at several conferences but also lent her expertise to help others. She served as a special resource to the officials of the Nursery School Association of Great Britain. Her background in providing early-childhood information to parents in poor economic environments proved invaluable to the British organization as well as to several other European children's groups.

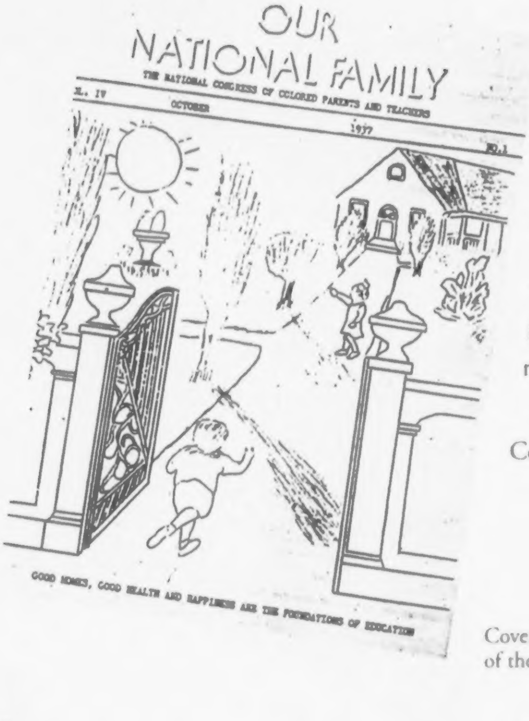
The National PTA and National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers made use of their close relationship to develop course work and classes for the newer association's members on how to organize local units.

Mrs. M.W. Blocker, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1931–1935

In 1931, Mrs. M.W. Blocker was elected to succeed Mrs. Butler, who took over the newly created role of secretary—an office she held through 1939. Mrs. Blocker's administration urged all her local units to observe not only the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers' birthday but also the National PTA's Founders Day observances. That year also brought publication of the first issue of *Our National Family*, the official periodical of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers.

Despite the determined efforts of both associations, the effects of the Depression were spreading. In September 1931, First Lady Lou Henry Hoover sent National PTA President Minnie Bradford a letter expressing her concern. In it, the First Lady reported receiving an increasing number of letters from parents who were experiencing difficulty in keeping their children in school. Lack of money meant lack of proper clothing, school supplies, and textbooks necessary for attending.

If this wasn't pressure enough, Mrs. Hoover also cited the importance of keeping older children in school, attending classes—not dropping out to get jobs to help support their families. Jobs, she wrote, were very scarce and the children should not be competing in the same scarce labor market as their fathers.


OUR NATIONAL FAMILY
THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF COLORED PARENTS AND TEACHERS
VOL. IV
OCTOBER
1937
NO. 1
GOOD HOMES, GOOD HEALTH AND HAPPINESS ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

Cover of a 1937 issue of *Our National Family*, the magazine of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers

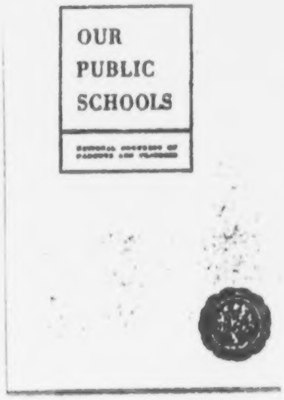
For the next several years, the National PTA spearheaded nationwide campaigns to provide for desperately poor children and to keep children in school.

Yet the nation continued a frightening economic slide. By 1933, voters looking for bold action sent a new administration to Washington. Franklin Delano Roosevelt launched the New Deal starting with 100 days of radical reforms and an "alphabet-soup" of acronymic government programs. People placed their hope in this active attempt to deal with the national emergency.

Newly appointed Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins called a special Conference on Child Health Recovery in 1934 to deal with the alarming increase in malnutrition among the nation's children. Once again, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers played a central role in this conference. The National PTA came to be seen as the only organization effectively providing parents with information on proper nutrition for their children and how to purchase food wisely. Often local PTAs were more than an information conduit; many served as clearinghouses for food supplies, standing "between starvation and children."

The economic crisis of the '30s left many families without the bare necessities, so PTAs across the country found themselves offering assistance, especially in the area of nutrition.

A number of local PTA units had to suspend operations after their local school districts declared bankruptcy. When unemployed property owners could not pay taxes, many schools closed because they couldn't pay teachers or purchase supplies.



OUR
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Left: *Our Public Schools* was published by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers to help parents and interested community members study and interpret the school problems of the day.

The problems faced by schools were spelled out in the 1934 PTA publication *Our Public Schools*, which advocated federal aid be used to reopen closed schools and provide school lunch programs to assure that needy children would receive at least one good meal a day. The publication also urged additional assistance programs aimed at high school and college students.

By 1934, many began to believe that the national economic emergency was abating. But it would not be until the end of the decade—when the demands of World War II would jump-start the American industrial engine—that people would consider the Depression truly over. As Minnie Bradford completed her second term of office in 1934, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers would begin looking beyond the crisis.

The importance of the home

In 1934, the National PTA voted to establish a three-year term for the presidency with no provision for reelection. A 20-year veteran of the Illinois PTA, Mary L. Langworthy was the first president to take office under this new provision in the bylaws.

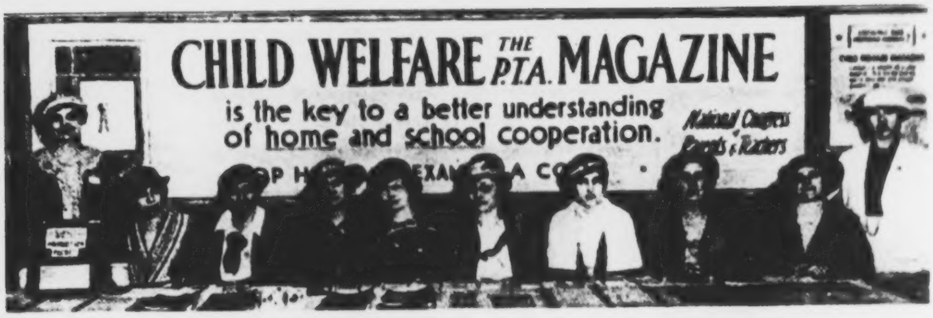
Her administration emphasized the importance of a good home atmosphere as the cornerstone for good child development. Mary wrote the following in a foreword to *Our Homes*, a companion publication to *Our Public Schools*, in 1936:

> We know only too well that in time of economic depression, the morale of the home is affected quite as much as the physical quality of it, and it will do us little good to insist upon adequate schools if our children leave those schools to return to inadequate homes.

Mary L. Langworthy, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1934–1937

Parent-Teacher
FORMERLY CHILD WELFARE

Although *Child Welfare* magazine emphasized the home-school connection, in 1934 the National Congress of Parents and Teachers changed the name of the magazine to the *National Parent-Teacher.*


CHILD WELFARE THE P.T.A. MAGAZINE
is the key to a better understanding of home and school cooperation.
National Congress Parents & Teachers

In 1934, the national publication *Child Welfare* changed its name to *National Parent-Teacher* to underscore the developing home-school relationship. The important roles of the home were reflected in the themes of the PTA's national conventions in the late 1930s: 1935, "The Home—Index to National Life"; 1936, "The Relation of the Home to Character Education"; 1937, "The Place of the Home in the Community."

Essie D. Mack, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1935–1939

Essie D. Mack was elected president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1935. She immediately set out to draw more members into the association. Her work stressed the critical importance of close and clear cooperation between teachers and parents in individual schools.

Two years later the National Congress of Parents and Teachers celebrated its 40th anniversary. In addressing the national convention, Mary Langworthy demonstrated the PTA's continuing concern for parent education and priorities:

> In no community are there more than a few persons who cannot afford to have their children taken care of, and for them there are ways by which public funds, linked with public opinion, can be invoked...Many parents who drive automobiles for pleasure, who often go to movies and pay for luxuries...say that they can't afford tonsillectomies or [eye]glasses for their children. *They* need education!

President Langworthy sits at the desk presented to the national congress by the New York state branch in memory of Dora C. Tuttle, a charter member of both the National Congress of Mothers and the New York State Congress of Mothers. The beautifully carved desk still sits in the president's office at the national headquarters.

DRIVER TR
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The PTA cooperated with the Automotive Safety Foundation on a program to educate members and children on traffic safety, and to support the enforcement of traffic safety laws.

As Mary Langworthy's administration came to an end, the National PTA launched a bold new initiative—the Traffic Safety Education Project—supported by a grant from the Automotive Safety Foundation. The project's introduction was timely. The number of cars on U.S. roads reached 32 million by the end of the decade. The program's goals were to educate members in safety rules and precautions, to provide opportunities for children to learn about traffic safety and to support all traffic safety measures and their enforcement.

The PTA was becoming an ever greater force on the national scene through its organized efforts to influence legislation encouraging federal aid to schools, supporting an extension of the merit system for civil employees, requesting additional child labor regulations, and seeking federal aid for slum clearance and low-income housing.

Preparing children to live in a democracy

Delegates to the 1937 convention of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers elected Frances S. Pettengill president. The Michigan native proclaimed her three-year theme: "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Her administration built upon its democratic foundation, working to strengthen the association's link and responsiveness to the local units. She told the 1938 convention:

> No matter what our profession or interest or creed—no matter whether we are parents or not—no matter what our situation in life—as participants in group living, as citizens in a democracy, our chief function is to prepare the oncoming generation to live successfully in a democracy.

Frances S. Pettengill, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1937–1940

As the nation began the painstaking recovery from economic disaster, the National PTA expanded its efforts in parent education. It did so through articles in the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine, through various study groups, and through correspondence courses.

The PTA became an official cosponsor of American Education Week in 1938.

The organization extended its influence by participating in and speaking at various international conferences. Frances Pettengill attended the meeting of the World Federation of Education Associations in Tokyo, serving as presiding officer of the Home and School section of the assembly. She then attended the Third Inter-American Conference in Mexico City, which dealt with poverty and education in the hemisphere.

In 1938, the importance of a full 12 years of education for all children was underscored by the National PTA's support and sponsorship of American Education Week. This series of public relations activities was designed to raise the nation's awareness of two key issues: the importance of education for all children and the importance of a close relationship between parents and teachers through their local Parent-Teacher Association. The National PTA continues to honor American Education Week to this day.

The growing number of requests coming in from local PTA units across the country for information and assistance required a growing national staff to coordinate and provide services. By the end of the decade, the staff could no longer be housed in the Washington offices leased from the NEA—or in the editorial offices of the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine based in Philadelphia.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH of the
NATIONAL CONGRESS of
PARENTS and TEACHERS
1919 - 1939 Twenty Years

President Pettengill and Vice President Anna Hayes look at a chart showing membership growth over 20 years. Membership soared from 100,000 in 1919 to 2.5 million in 1939.

This prompted the National PTA to rethink not just its staffing needs—but also where to locate its offices to better serve its members. The decision was made to relocate in 1939 to the Midwest, specifically to Chicago, where the entire staff could be housed in rented space at 600 South Michigan Avenue. The new location provided the organization ample space to centralize its handsomely documented archives, history, and proceedings in an accessible, modern library facility.

While the National PTA began to concentrate on giving parents detailed information about tuberculosis, a greater malignancy was about to devastate Europe. On September 1, Hitler's Germany invaded Poland, plunging much of Europe into war again—a war that would mean death to 45 million men, women, and children. Two years later the conflict would force the United States into the war, and PTA members would once again rally to support our forces abroad and families at home.

With its membership ranks swelling, the PTA needed to expand its staff and office facilities to service its members adequately. It began to ponder its needs and various locations, and settled on relocating its offices to Chicago, in the heartland of America. Pictured here is a portion of Chicago's famed lakefront and the building at 600 South Michigan Avenue where the PTA headquarters was housed from 1939–1954.

THE VOICE OF THE PTA—90 YEARS IN PRINT

The year 1996 marked the 90th anniversary of a grand publishing tradition for the National PTA—its magazine. And while it has appeared under several different names and in several different formats, not a year has gone by since 1906 without a magazine to give voice to the National PTA's ambitions and concerns, and to spread word of its work and mission.

The first issue, in November 1906, opened with this statement from President Hannah Schoff: "*The National Congress of Mothers Magazine* extends its greetings to everyone who is interested in childhood." The magazine's circulation kept pace with the rapid growth of the organization, providing valuable parenting information and spreading news of the fledgling organization's doings across the country. In December 1909, the magazine's title was changed to *Child Welfare*, placing its focus squarely on the organization's chief concern.

By the 1930s, the magazine had grown considerably in sophistication. In-depth articles by leading experts in the fields of education, health, and child welfare were illustrated by plentiful photographs and lively pen-and-ink illustrations. Updates on PTA activities in different states and local units revealed the organization's scope. Beginning in September 1934, the magazine was published in an oversized format that made it more attractive than ever, and its name was changed to the *National Parent-Teacher*, "to more definitely associate the publication with the parent-teacher movement," according to the magazine's own announcement of the change. Working in affiliation with a private, New York-based publishing company, the new PTA magazine featured top graphic design and production values, especially in its dramatic full-color cover illustrations, and carried more advertising than ever before. This era ended suddenly in late 1938, when the decision was made to adopt a strict noncommercial policy that remained in place over 30 years, in order to protect the magazine's editorial integrity.

The PTA magazine has always been very popular. Its coverage of issues relating to the education, health, and welfare of children attracted parents eager for information on building an environment conducive to children's growth.

National Congress of Mothers
Magazine
NOVEMBER

PUBLISHED BY THE
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS

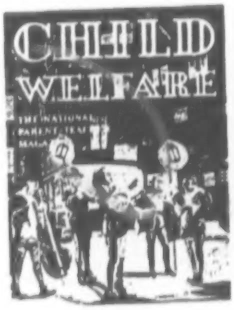
First Issue—1906

CHILD-WELFARE
MAGAZINE
National Congress of Mothers

1910

Child-Welfare
Magazine

1925



CHILD
WELFARE
THE NATIONAL PARENT-TEACHER MAGA

1931

National Parent-Teacher

1941

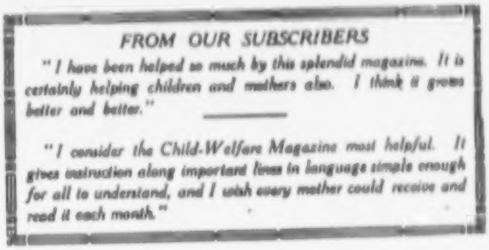
IT'S TOPS
IN GOOD READING
SUBSCRIBE TO
THE PTA MAGAZINE
ONE YEAR FOR ONLY

At one time PTA congresses had magazine chairs who promoted the magazine to members and others interested in child welfare.

Not long after, a young woman named Eva Grant was hired to take charge of the magazine, and she led it into its period of widest influence and greatest circulation. She remained editor of the magazine from 1939 to 1972, and presided over its next name change, in 1961, to *The PTA Magazine*. During her tenure the magazine featured prominent regular contributors such as J. Edgar Hoover and Margaret Mead, and offered a greater breadth of information for parents than ever before.

Circulation declined in the late 1960s, paralleling the decrease in the PTA's membership, and despite a short-lived effort to once again open to advertising, *The PTA Magazine* was replaced in 1975 by a much more modest publication. *PTA Today*, as it was called, evolved out of the former *National PTA Bulletin*, and in its first three years appeared in tabloid form. Before long, however, *PTA Today* returned to a typical magazine format. Circulated mainly to local PTA units, it kept them informed of National PTA activities and programs and provided the same useful parenting information that was the hallmark of all PTA magazines.

The magazine underwent its most recent change in September 1995, when it was given a colorful makeover and a new name, *Our Children*, that harks back to the theme the founders decided on for the first convention, "All Children Are Our Children." The magazine's appeal remains the same as in Hannah Schoff's day nine decades ago: for "everyone who is interested in childhood," the PTA's magazine has always been the best place to turn.



FROM OUR SUBSCRIBERS

"I have been helped so much by this splendid magazine. It is certainly helping children and mothers also. I think it grows better and better."

"I consider the Child-Welfare Magazine most helpful. It gives instruction along important lines in language simple enough for all to understand, and I wish every mother could receive and read it each month."

In a 1912 issue, subscribers to *Child-Welfare Magazine* testify to the magazine's beneficial content and readability.

National Parent-Teacher

1958

PTA
THE PTA MAGAZINE

1967

1973

1986

Happy 100th Birthday, National PTA

1996

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1940–1949

When Virginia Kletzer of Oregon became president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in May 1940, its membership—like much of the world—was nervously eyeing the relentless march of storm troopers across western Europe. As Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Rumania, and France fell in rapid succession, Britain stood alone and the world waited for Nazi aggression to focus on Europe's last bastion.

Back at home, the effects of the Depression had eased, but 8 million people—almost 15 percent of the workforce—were still unemployed. Britain's isolation turned into dependence upon the United States for war materiel, which shifted the economy into hectic and essential production, eventually ending the unemployment problem.

Virginia Kletzer, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1940–1943

The transition to war

Virginia Kletzer was the right woman at the right time for the National PTA. She presided over a healthy organization, which had grown during the Depression by offering services, information, and comfort to millions of American parents.

Mrs. Kletzer worked tirelessly to keep this expanding association directed towards its goal of working for the betterment of children and youth. Her immediate concerns, echoed by parents in local PTAs throughout the country, was not only with the welfare and education of young children but also with the physical fitness of the nation's youth, which would shortly be found to be deficient.

Opposite page: Even throughout the war years the National Congress of Parents and Teachers worked tirelessly to keep directed towards its goal of working for the betterment of children and youth.

The 1940s

U.S. presidents: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman

Headlines: Pearl Harbor attacked; U.S. birthrate soars; D-Day Normandy invasion; UN created; Germany surrenders; Atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima, Nagasaki; The Holocaust; Cold war begins; Jackie Robinson breaks baseball's color barrier; Gandhi assassinated; Birth of Israel

Daily life: First Social Security checks mailed out; Wartime rationing instituted; Jitterbugging; Cost of living rises almost 30%; U.S. population: 132 million; Average income: $2,657; Average public school teacher's income: $2,261; Average home: $3,800; Loaf of bread: 12¢; Gallon of gas: 21¢; Television: $189.95

Movies: Rebecca, The Grapes of Wrath, Fantasia, Citizen Kane, Casablanca, Lifeboat, The Best Years of Our Lives, Notorious, Gentleman's Agreement, Going My Way

Books: The Power and the Glory, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Native Son, You Can't Go Home Again, Animal Farm, Hiroshima, Diary of Anne Frank, All the King's Men

Art & music: Duke Ellington, Rodeo Ballet, Appalachian Spring

On Broadway: Pal Joey, Oklahoma, On the Town, Carousel, Brigadoon, Kiss Me Kate, South Pacific

Popular songs: Don't Fence Me In, When You Wish Upon a Star, Chattanooga Choo-Choo, White Christmas, Paper Doll, I'll Be Seeing You, Sentimental Journey, Mairzy Doats, Bali Ha'i

Radio: The Guiding Light, Truth or Consequences, Ozzie and Harriet, Strike It Rich

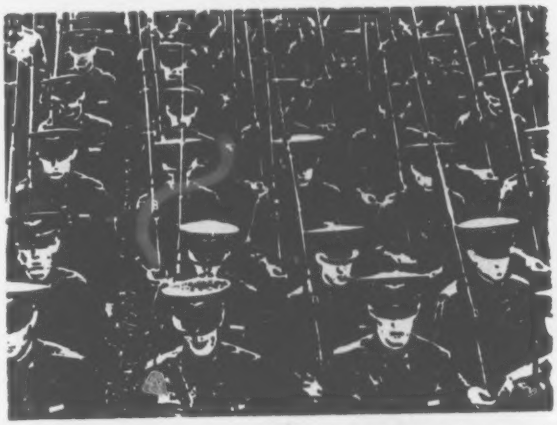
TV: Queen for a Day, Lassie, You Bet Your Life, Lone Ranger, Our Miss Brooks, Texaco Star Theater

What's new? Nylon stockings, first freeway, Cheerios, penicillin, ballpoint pens, Timex watches, Ajax cleanser, Reddi-Whip, transistors, Silly Putty, Sara Lee cheesecake, Tupperware

The National PTA played a central role in the 1940 White House Conference on Children in a Democracy. The PTA took the White House conference theme, "The Child in His Community," as its national convention theme that year. The goal was to coordinate child welfare services nationwide to avoid duplication and confusion. As Virginia Kletzer told the 1941 convention:

> We chose, as a part of our obligation to American childhood and youth, to set forth in definite terms the importance of maintaining those essential services in education, health, and social welfare through which the physical, mental, and emotional stability of the present generation of children may be maintained…there is no security for the nation as a whole if any large segment of its childhood and youth is disinherited.

As U.S. involvement in the war became increasingly inevitable, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers kept a vigilant eye on the growing war economy. The organization constantly reminded legislators of the importance of maintaining and even expanding federal aid to education and especially to child welfare services, lest they get lost in the rush to encourage military production.



Selective Service exams revealed that many of this country's young men were physically and mentally deficient, possibly as a result of years of poor nutrition and childhood neglect.

In 1940, the United States reactivated the Selective Service System. As young men were drafted into the armed services, the PTA became alarmed over the high rate of young people rejected for service because of physical or mental defects. Too many young people were physically unfit or had their ailments neglected for too long. Equally disturbing was the number of healthy young men whose education level was so poor that they could not be admitted to basic training.

Mrs. Kletzer told the delegates to the 1941 convention:

> It is obvious that most of the difficulties which cause rejection are not acquired in the few months or even years preceding induction but are rather the accumulated results of childhood neglect, poor nutrition, and even natal and prenatal conditions.

As doctors examined the newest and youngest students entering public schools that year, Summer Round-Up offered significant opportunity for the PTA to provide information and advice on proper nutrition and medical care for the children of a nation weakened by a decade of economic duress.

At this period of growth for the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, it secured a grant from the National PTA in order to widely distribute parent-teacher training

P T A
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
1897
PROTECTING CHILDREN

During the war years the PTA affixed this logo to its materials.

The PTA's Summer Round-Up program, which checked youngsters for health problems, took on added significance, with PTAs even looking into the health records of school-age children.

manuals and rural service leaflets among constituents and communities earnestly seeking the association's guidance and assistance.

At the next conference, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers President Mary Foster McDavid led discussions of the theme, "The Place of the PTA in the Total National Defense Program." Much of the interest centered on training to prepare local unit leaders for the home front demands that wartime would make on them.

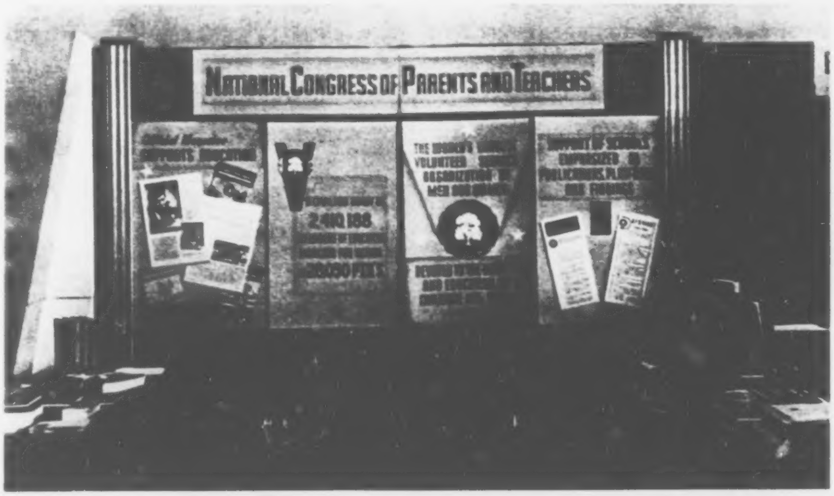
Mary Foster McDavid, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1939–1942

The war comes

Ironically, the event that pulled the United States into the century's second world war came, not as expected from Europe—rather, from Japan when on December 7, 1941, this small Asian country attacked the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers immediately volunteered to do its part, working closely with organizations nationwide to establish war emergency committees to support the nation's war effort and provide for the common defense.

As part of preparedness, PTA units organized community "safe houses," primarily in U.S. coastal communities, where children could find refuge in case of an enemy attack.

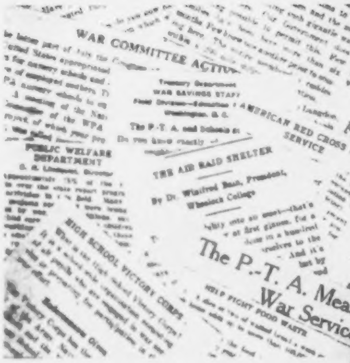


The congress capitalized on wartime rhetoric for its exhibit at various education-related conventions.

The National PTA was amazingly flexible in its wartime activities. In 1943, Mrs. Kletzer reported that the organization's contribution to the war effort included war bond drives, scrap drives, salvage and conservation campaigns, service on ration boards and price panels as well as war-related articles in the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine. The organization published a

When the United States became involved in the war in December of 1941, the PTA mobilized its members to help the war effort through conservation campaigns and recycling programs, all the while helping to provide stability in children's lives.

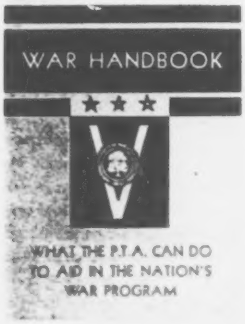
Right: This young student helps bind newspapers as part of a wartime salvage campaign.


WAR COMMITTEE ACTION
PUBLIC WELFARE DEPARTMENT
THE AIR RAID SHELTER
AMERICAN RED CROSS NEWS SERVICE
Food Rationing
COMMISSION ON STUDENT
ZONE BLOCK MOTHERS
HIGH SCHOOL VICTORY CORPS
The P.-T. A. Measures Up In War Services!

Food preservation became commonplace during the war years.

War Handbook: What the PTA Can Do to Aid in the Nation's War Program, which was distributed to local PTA units nationwide.

As fathers, husbands, and brothers departed for the war, the mothers, wives, and sisters filled their jobs at home, producing materials essential to the troops abroad. Doctors and nurses also departed their practices to tend the wounded where they fell in battle. Responding to the lack of child care and health care at home, PTA members nationwide assumed roles as day-care providers for small children whose mothers went to work and studied nursing and first aid in order to help the sick or injured stateside.



WAR HANDBOOK

WHAT THE P.T.A. CAN DO
TO AID IN THE NATION'S
WAR PROGRAM

This National Congress of Parents and Teachers' publication was distributed to local PTAs nationwide.

For its part, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers stressed protection of the child from the war's effects. Further, according to the association's *Coral Anniversary History:*

> The local units…were urged to share in the war efforts by…helping to provide all people with better opportunities for living in an atmosphere of freedom and respect. With ready response the local units gave their aid through such services as safety campaigns, health and recreation programs,…victory gardens, first aid instruction, salvage drives, and war bond purchases. The National Congress [of Colored Parents and Teachers] set the pattern by also investing in war bonds.

Responding to a study of community needs, many of the NCCPT's local units accepted an additional three-part program to aid the national defense:

1. Giving all possible aid to communities adjacent to army camps to provide adequately for wholesome recreation for young men in training
2. Improving home conditions for employees in communities where essential war industries were located
3. Helping to maintain in every community a spirit of cooperation and helpfulness

Anna M.P. Strong, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1942–1945

Aside from the major focus on war efforts, the two congresses made progress in an unrelated area. When Anna M.P. Strong assumed leadership of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1942, she became her association's first current president to address the National PTA's annual convention. The 20 state congresses of Colored Parents and Teachers existing at that time encompassed all of the South as well as units as far away as New Mexico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

TRIBUTE TO A FOUNDER

To commemorate the vision of National PTA Founder Alice McLellan Birney, a memorial was dedicated by her family members and PTA officers at the place of her birth in Marietta, Georgia, on September 27, 1942. National PTA President Virginia Kletzer addressed PTA leaders and Birney family members at the dedication ceremony. Among those present were Mrs. Lawrence Wood Robert Jr., granddaughter of Alice Birney, and Alice Birney Robert, the founder's great granddaughter.

Constructed on the site of Marietta High School, later named the Alice McLellan Birney High School, a sundial sits in the center of a courtyard paved with marble slabs, each carrying the name of the state congress by which it was contributed. An inscription on the sundial reads, "This sun court is dedicated to a great woman who made a great dream come true: Alice Birney, founder of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. From the seed of faith she planted has come the flowering of a new era of hope and promise for America's children."

At the dedication ceremony of the Alice McLellan Birney Memorial, Mrs. William Kletzer, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, addresses the assemblage.

Above: Mrs. Lawrence Wood Robert Jr., granddaughter of Alice Birney and Alice Birney Robert, the founder's great granddaughter, examine the sun dial dedicated to Mrs. Birney.

Minnetta A. Hastings, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1943–1946

New leadership

The 1943 National PTA Convention—originally scheduled for Chicago—was canceled because of government restrictions on travel. That year, the election of officers was held by mail, and Minnetta Hastings, of Wisconsin, took office as PTA president. During her administration, support for the war effort continued unabated at all levels of the PTA, even though wartime conditions had forced a number of local units to disband.

But a new threat loomed to rivet their attention—an unexpected and frightening increase in juvenile delinquency. Youthful transgressions ranging from vandalism to brawls, from disobedience in schools to automobile theft, from shoplifting to armed robbery began to rise.

Several factors contributed to this scourge: parents away at war, teachers away at war, fewer resources available at home, fewer recreational opportunities, limited school facilities—all helping spur an alarming upswing in juvenile problems.

Minnetta Hastings told her membership:

> Children can so easily become the casualties of war…It is not that they are being killed or maimed by bombs and bullets. Their enemies are disrupted home life and lack of proper supervision by parents; the insecurity, tensions and excitements of war; lowering of educational standards and opportunities; lessened medical and health services; poor housing and bad environment. These and other social influences are maiming and crippling children physically, mentally and spiritually.

Mrs. Hastings' comments predicted what was to become a growing problem. Several PTA committees would address this alarming issue and offer concrete suggestions for resolution. In 1946 the National PTA participated in the National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency at the invitation of the U.S. Attorney General. In coming years the PTA would remain involved with combating juvenile delinquency through a variety of other projects, including advocating for legislation on juvenile delinquency prevention and control, which would finally be enacted in 1968. (See "Bringing Justice to Juveniles," p. 110.)

Juvenile delinquency is a social issue that exacts its harsh toll at the local level. If war can ever be said to have beneficial effects, for the PTA it was this:

> Wartime restrictions on travel and large gatherings served to revitalize the organization at the grass roots. Local units held more activities and meetings. And as parents showed intense interests in the well-being of their children, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers was there to provide ongoing educational information through programs, publications, and materials.

During the war years, the country again saw a rise in juvenile delinquent behavior, due in part to fathers and teachers being away at war, fewer resources at home, and a decline in recreational opportunities for youth.

Above: Throughout its history the PTA had supported public housing and safe, clean play areas for children.

Left: French children wait for the American Red Cross volunteers to dispense milk to them. The PTA worked with relief agencies such as the Red Cross, which provided aid to the war-torn countries of Europe.

An international force

In 1944 World War II still raged—but victory for the Allies became tangible. As the war slowly wound down, attention began to shift to anticipating post-war problems. The need to rebuild a war-torn world was obvious. But the real question remained "What kind of world should we build?" The National PTA president was invited by the U.S. State Department to play a role in shaping the response to that question.

Minnetta Hastings was among those gathered in October 1944 to review and recommend implementation of the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals, a plan developed by the Allies to promote international cooperation and prevent further warfare. The proposals, as discussed and amended, eventually provided the foundation for the United Nations Charter.

Mrs. Hastings instructed local PTA units to study the proposals and offer their own insights as well. Hundreds of meetings were held across the country, and PTA members discussed the various pros and cons.

Finally, with the collected comments of the membership, Mrs. Hastings wrote to Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the proposals were in keeping with the deepest ideals of the PTA.

The National PTA made recommendations for the following:

1. The creation of an appropriate international organization in which the United States shall be a member, with power to enforce a just and lasting peace.
2. The establishment of an international organization for education, to provide for educational reconstruction and to promote cultural understanding among all nations.
3. The development of an international program for the care and protection of children and youth throughout the world.

National PTA President Minnetta Hastings was invited to a meeting of the allied nations in Washington, DC, in 1944. The meeting resulted in the drawing up of the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals, the blueprint for the United Nations Charter.

When the United Nations was founded in San Francisco in 1945, the National PTA served as a consultant to the U.S. delegation. All three of the PTA's recommendations became realities in the course of organizing the UN, the second and third taking on worldwide importance with the eventual establishment of UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the UN Commission on Human Rights.

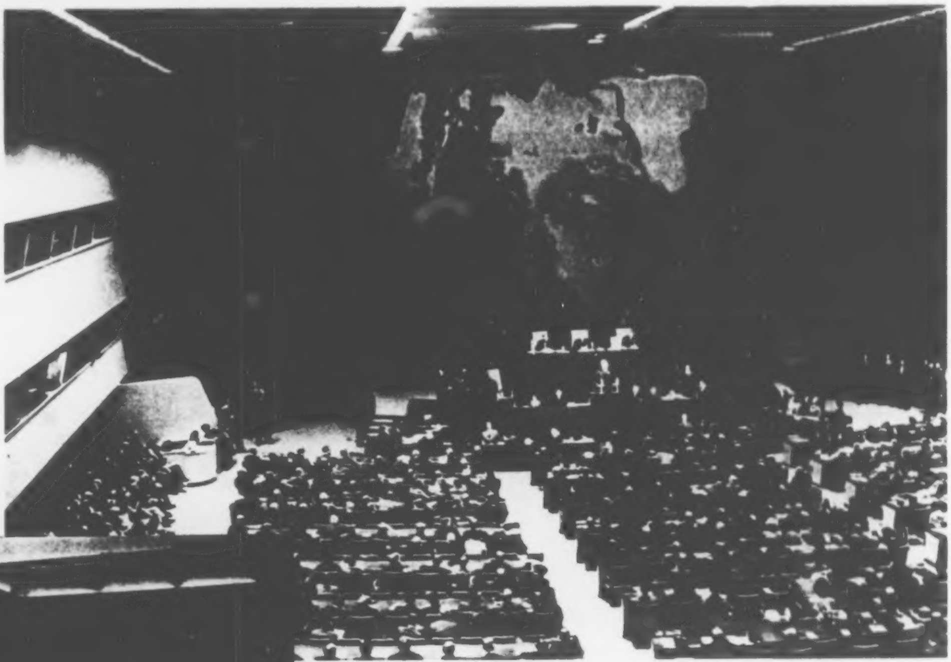
The PTA promoted and financially supported the work of UNESCO, especially in areas involving feeding children worldwide, providing them with medical assistance, and aiding in the distribution of literary and cultural materials.

Important as these international issues were, both the National PTA and National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers continued to stress pressing needs here at home. As the war ended in 1945, Mrs. William W. M. Henry became president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, and immediately initiated a series of interracial workshops in cooperation with the National PTA. The purpose: to improve relations between the races in the postwar world. Responding to another heightened concern, the NCCPT's North Carolina and Virginia Congresses launched workshops to study conditions in the juvenile justice system in their respective states, an issue long considered critical by the National PTA.

Mrs. William W. M. Henry, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1945–1949

Jubilee History
50th Anniversary

In honor of the PTA's 50th anniversary, the organization published the *Jubilee History*, a historical narrative of PTA since its founding in 1897.



Above: The PTA president served as a consultant to the U.S. delegation of the United Nations at its founding in 1945.

Left: The PTA took a particular interest in the meetings of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which oversaw the care and protection of the world's children.

When Minnetta Hastings' term of office ended in 1946, she was presiding over a postwar organization with international initiatives. Her administration had guided the PTA through much of World War II and had seen it develop into a stronger, more influential association. The stage was set for the observance of the 50th anniversary of the association.

During the golden jubilee year, the first detailed history of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, *Jubilee History*, was written and published for the membership. Mrs. L.W. (Mabel Wilhams) Hughes, elected president at the 1946 national convention in Denver, worked with the National PTA leadership to identify goals for the organization's future. Her administration's Four-Point Program aimed for the following:

1. To unite local PTAs in a drive to strengthen school curricula
2. To improve the health of the nation's children
3. To promote world understanding through the United Nations organizations
4. To continue to stress and expand life education for parents across the land and throughout the world

Mabel Wilhams Hughes, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1946–1949

THE PTA IN JAPAN

General Douglas MacArthur recognized the potential PTAs held for anchoring a democratic way of life in Japanese communities following World War II. As early as 1945, PTA models were introduced in Japan. National PTA President Anna Hayes traveled there in the summer of 1950 to observe the progress being made through the association and to consult with the country's education and community leaders.

Rose Cologne speaks to parents of students attending the Nanzan Elementary School, on school problems during a regular meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association in Tokyo.

Reflections from Rose Cologne, one of the PTA leaders involved in the effort to bring the PTA to Japan after World War II, first appeared in the *National Parent-Teacher.*

> As our C-54 Army transport left Iwo Jima the young pilot said, "At straight up seven I will set you down in Tokyo." At straight up seven on that hot day of July 17, 1948, he set us down at Tokyo airport, and my six months' service as PTA consultant with the Education Division of the Army of Occupation began. In those six months I worked with five committees made up of forty Japanese, among whom were educators, fathers, businessmen, and one Buddhist priest... Since I spoke no Japanese and most of the people I worked with spoke no English, it was a very full six months. I came away, however, convinced that the infant parent-teacher movement is the greatest instrument through which the Japanese can experience democracy at "the rice roots." I came away feeling that the new Japanese P.T.A. is the most important single force in the democratizing of Japanese adults. —December 1949

National PTA President Anna Hayes (right) with two of the Japanese educators involved in bringing PTAs to Japan.

These students at an Idaho elementary school benefited from National PTA President Mabel Hughes' Four-Point Program emphasizing improved curricula, childhood health, world understanding, and continuing education for parents.

RETURN ALL CLEANED UTENSILS
TO PROPER PLACE

In 1946, the U.S. government passed legislation mandating a federal school lunch program.

The membership's initial support of this program took the form of a massive clothing and food drive. This effort on behalf of people in war-torn countries, was conducted in cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

The National PTA lobbied for and finally saw passage of legislation at home that made the federal hot lunch program in schools a permanent feature of our education system.

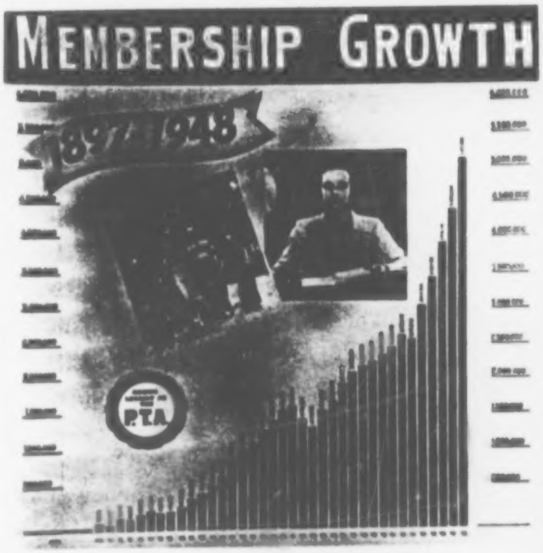
Growing cooperation with the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers was fostered through the establishment of a joint administrative committee composed of officers from both organizations. Such efforts would evolve into the idea of unifying the two organizations, a milestone event that would eventually occur some 20 years later.

During 1947, the National PTA formed a partnership with Northwestern University to sponsor a three-year project for training prospective teachers and—through intensive in-service workshops—current classroom teachers on how to work more closely with parents and parent-teacher groups. Sensing the coming boom in the number of children in the nation, the PTA also embarked upon a high-visibility project to attract more people into the teaching profession and to raise minimum salaries for teachers, believing that this would help attract more men to teaching.

At the close of the decade, the PTA cooperated with Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, on a project to train prospective teachers in how to effectively work with parents. At the same time the congress was also training its leadership in how to educate parents to work more effectively with schools for student success.

In 1948, the organization took a proactive stance on health services, helping to draft federal legislation that became the Local Public Health Services Act. This law provided health units to U.S. counties that still lacked them.

But even as the PTA worked to improve the physical health of children, it was equally concerned with what was going on in their hearts and heads. Juvenile delinquency was still on the increase. So in response to the concerns of its members, the National PTA drafted a Plan of Action Against Unwholesome Comics, Motion Pictures and Radio Programs to assist parents in dealing with perceived detrimental influences on young people.



Two years short of the end of the decade, the PTA once again showed a marked increase in membership, with more than 5 million members toiling on behalf of children.

Anna Hayes, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1949–1952

As the 1940s ended, the National PTA continued to toil on behalf of young people. When the U.S. Hoover Commission assessed the health of the nation and found it wanting, the National PTA responded by lobbying on behalf of a long-time goal—the establishment of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. As Mrs. John E. (Anna Hansen) Hayes took over the presidency of the National PTA in 1949, she saw one of Alice Birney's original Chautauqua dreams—a cabinet department devoted to the concerns of children—become a reality.

Mrs. J.S. Morgan, who took office as president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers that same year, chose as her theme "For Every Child an Equal Chance," which presaged the significant changes that would take place just a few years later.

That year, too, the national office of the NCCPT moved to Dover, Delaware. Both associations were now positioned to deal with one of the most challenging decades in their respective histories. The 1950s would prove to be quite a ride.

Mrs. J. S. Morgan, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1949–1953

The Board of Managers of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers meet to discuss the establishment of an administrative committee made up of members of both the NCCPT and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

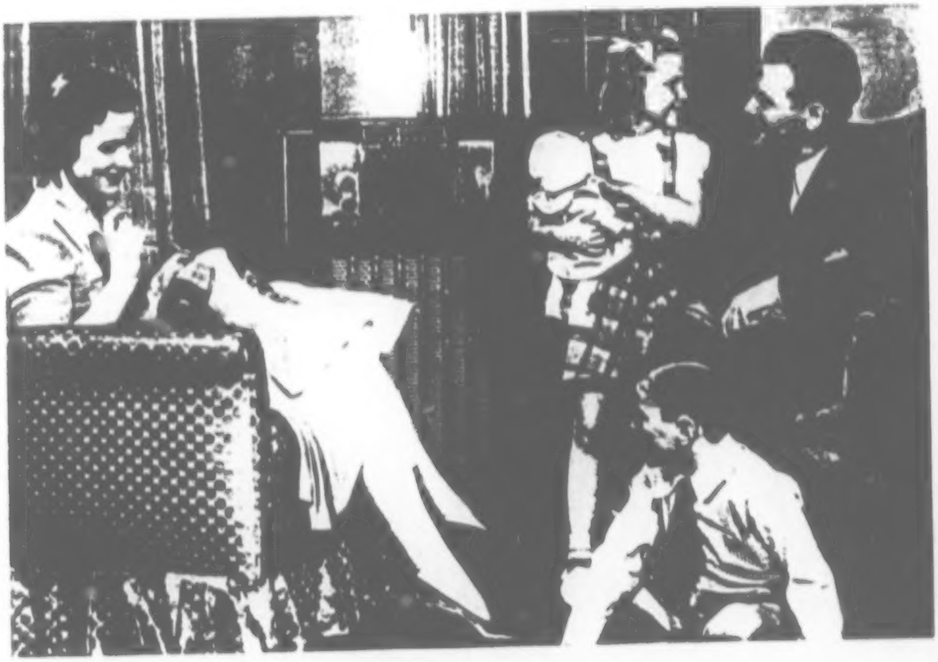
PTA ON THE AIR

Long before Ward and June Cleaver worried about the Beaver or MTV brought us *The Real World*, the real-life problems of a typical American family were portrayed in a highly popular radio program launched by the National PTA on Saturday, January 10, 1942. For the first time, given the immediacy of radio and the vast audience its programs drew, the National PTA had a means to communicate to millions, members and nonmembers alike. When the PTA's National Radio Project Committee moved to address the unique problems families would face if the nation were suddenly mobilized for combat, radio provided the ideal medium.

First appearing barely a month after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, *On the Home Front*—later entitled *The Family in War*, and ultimately, *The Baxters*—focused on maintaining the health and well-being of children and the family while our country was at war. That first broadcast featured a special wartime address by Mrs. Virginia Kletzer, president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and a call to action in light of the crisis facing all Americans. The dramatized doings of the popular Baxter family—Marge, Bill, Janie, Bud, and Sandy—as they faced the everyday problems of a typical American family started the following week.

The program was a joint effort of the National PTA and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC). PTA officers researched topics and selected speakers for the brief panel discussion that followed each weekly episode, and NBC provided production assistance and the actors who portrayed the Baxters. Each episode was broadcast over the NBC radio network.

After a time the concluding panel discussion was dropped, replaced by a narrator referred to as "The Voice of the PTA." This was provided by Eva Grant, editor of the *National Parent-Teacher*, whose narration clarified the message of each episode, addressing such topics as household economy, nutrition, fitness, and the changing roles of family members in a wartime environment. Among themselves, the Baxter family discussed stress, personal emotions, and prob-



Years ago the radio had as prominent a place in the family home as the television does today. That's why the PTA often used the radio to communicate its programming efforts and its values.

lems facing youth. To promote the show and its value to parents, the National PTA called upon its state presidents to organize study and listening groups to respond to broadcasts and encourage continued support.

The Baxter family: Marge, Bill, Bud, and Janie.

So timely and relevant were the topics covered by the Baxters that the program attracted millions of listeners across the country. NBC extended the series well beyond its original 13 weeks in 1942, giving *The Baxters* a run that rivaled the most popular commercial radio shows. The vastly popular program ran through the end of the decade, becoming a vehicle for educating Americans about postwar society.

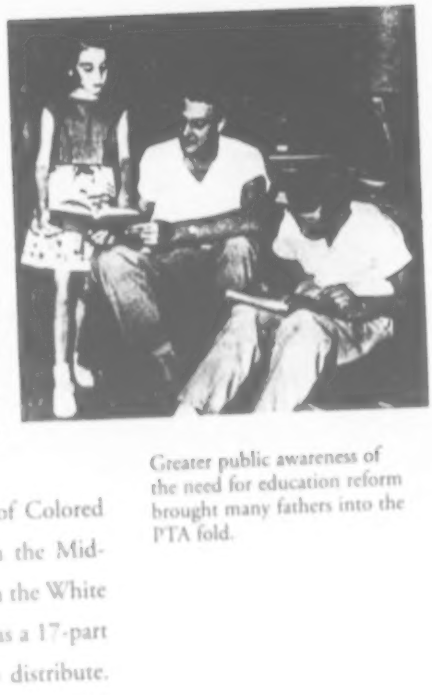
By dealing with the same issues faced by real families across the nation, the Baxters helped turn us into a nation of neighbors. Their story, broadcast week after week over the radio, gave the National PTA an invaluable means to support families during one of the most difficult times in American history.

WHO
What the answer?

Following the lead of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, state congresses began using the radio as a vehicle of communication. The Iowa PTA broadcasts an education information show on WHO out of Des Moines (above), and the New Jersey PTA hosts a show entitled, *What's the Answer?* (right).

SUNDAE

1950–1959



Greater public awareness of the need for education reform brought many fathers into the PTA fold.

For the National Congress of Parents and Teachers the period from 1950 to 1959 was a time of great action and accomplishment. The 1950s would, in fact, be heralded as one of the most significant decades in PTA history. Thanks to the Baby Boom and growth of suburbia, PTA membership soared.

This was a period of tremendous economic growth and technological advances. Americans could, for the first time, afford new cars, new homes, and a new form of home entertainment called television. It was a time in which parents sought to provide their children with a life of comfort and opportunity that had not been attained by any previous generation. And it was during this period that the PTA would work to combat rising juvenile delinquency, promote the use of the Salk polio vaccine, respond to the calls for education reform, and prove its unwavering support of desegregation.

As the decade opened, Mrs. J.S. Morgan, president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, and National PTA President Anna P. Hayes participated in the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth. This fourth conference in the White House series had as its special emphasis mental health. Adopted at the conference was a 17-part "Pledge to Children" that thousands of parent-teacher leaders would be asked to distribute. Among the 464 national organizations and agencies that took part in the conference, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers was identified as "the organization to stand at the front in carrying out the plans and pledge of the conference."

The 1950s

U.S. presidents: Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower

Headlines: The Iron Curtain descends over Eastern Europe to begin the cold war, which heats up with the Korean "police action"; National Guardsmen open way for African-American students to attend integrated Kentucky schools; The U.S. detonates the first H-bomb; Brown v. Board of Education; Polio vaccines developed; Russians launch Sputnik; Castro overthrows Cuban regime; Smoking linked to heart disease; Sen. Joseph McCarthy's witch-hunting ends with televised hearings

Daily life: U.S. telephone call now costs 10¢; The Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants move to California; Clairol ads coyly ask, "Does she or doesn't she?;" The first enclosed shopping mall; For the first time, Americans consume more margarine than butter; Cost of a first-class stamp rises to 4¢; Average income: $4,657; Average public school teacher's income: $4,085 Average home: $12,225; Loaf of bread: 19¢; A gallon of gas: 30.4¢; A pair of Levis: $3.75

Movies: An American in Paris, High Noon, From Here to Eternity, On the Waterfront, The Ten Commandments, Ben Hur

Books: The Catcher in the Rye, The Cat in the Hat, Dr. Zhivago, The Miracle Worker

On Broadway: Guys and Dolls, The King and I, West Side Story, The Sound of Music

Popular songs: Mona Lisa, Your Cheatin' Heart, Blue Suede Shoes, Ebb Tide, Young at Heart, Rock Around the Clock, Sixteen Tons, Mack the Knife

TV: Your Show of Shows, Dick Clark's American Bandstand, Gunsmoke, As the World Turns and Edge of Night begin their run

What's new? Color television, power steering, frozen TV dinners, Pop Art, Cool Jazz, the frisbee, the Barbie Doll, Minute Rice, Polaroid cameras, Xerox copiers

LET'S NOT HESITATE, LET'S ALL PARTICIPATE
PTA
Join the P.T.A

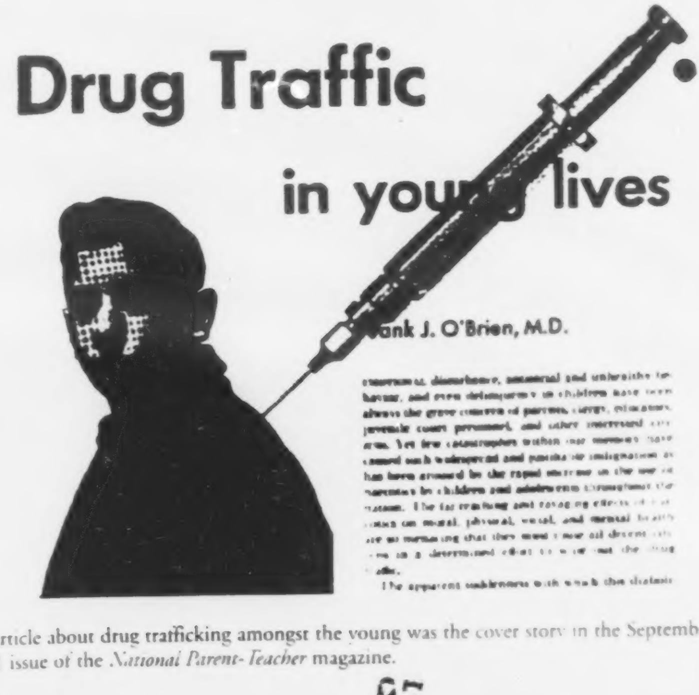
Membership posters such as this one appeared in schools across the country urging everyone to join the PTA and make a difference in children's lives and children's education.

But as the 1950s unfolded, the National PTA and its sister organization would participate in a much broader spectrum of programs than the "mental and moral" health of children. They became concerned with questions of nationality, race, culture, and group relations in all sections of the country and the adverse impact divisions between groups had on children and youth.

Addressing a new threat

The PTA's determined efforts to address juvenile delinquency during the 1940s expanded in the 1950s. The problem was first underscored during World War II and was attributed to the number of families fractured by parents leaving home to serve in the armed forces, and to women leaving home to work in factories and shipyards as part of the war effort. The war would end but juvenile behavior problems did not. In fact, they seemed to worsen during the 1950s.

The return of economic good times and the growing materialism of a postwar society were then blamed for the rising incidence of delinquency, which was further complicated by a growing use of illicit drugs.



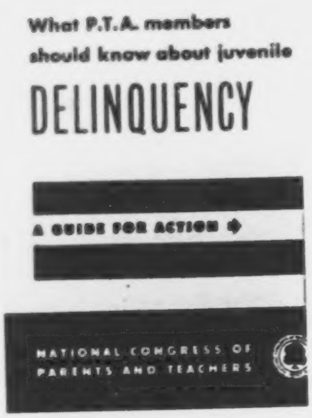
Drug Traffic in young lives

ank J. O'Brien, M.D.

An article about drug trafficking amongst the young was the cover story in the September 1951 issue of the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine.

The PTA was at the forefront of the drug issue nearly 15 years before it would receive the full attention of the nation. The September 1951 issue of *National Parent-Teacher* magazine said:

> Not only the future of our children but the future of America may well depend upon the action taken by American parents, teachers and other citizens with regard to the appalling facts [of drug experimentation and addiction among teenagers]. We are starkly confronted "in our own backyard" with as grim a foe to our civilization as any that war can offer. Unless we take immediate and persistent measures to eradicate the menace of narcotic drugs, thousands of boys and girls will fall victim—as other thousands have already done—to one of the foulest trades ever known to man.



What P.T.A. members
should know about juvenile
DELINQUENCY

A GUIDE FOR ACTION

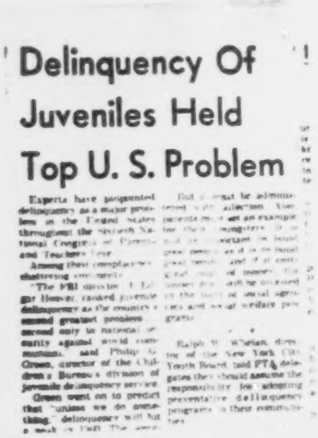
NATIONAL CONGRESS OF
PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Published in 1957 by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the 96-page *What P.T.A. Members Should Know About Juvenile Delinquency* provided practical and realistic advice for parents, school personnel, and the community for preventing and controlling juvenile delinquency.

To address this growing threat, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1951 called a special conference on narcotics and drug addiction. Representatives from 25 other national organizations involved with the welfare of children were brought together. As a result of the conference, the National PTA acquired a leadership role in identifying and heightening awareness among parents about this growing threat.

Throughout the decade the PTA continued to speak out on the issue of drugs and created study courses on Building Healthy Personalities and Understanding the Age of Adolescence. The goal was to educate members about physical and mental health issues—as well as the accompanying social pressures that faced teens and youths. In 1957, the PTA published *What PTA Members Should Know About Juvenile Delinquency.* This publication called for parents to know about and pay attention to the problems faced by their children—and to provide them with a solid home structure and sound values as a defense against this national problem and as a basis for "good citizenship."

The PTA encouraged its members to provide a stable homelife for their children in an effort to prevent young people from embarking upon a path of delinquent behavior. PTA leaders participated in family life education workshops like the one pictured here in order to educate the PTA membership in family values.



Delinquency Of
Juveniles Held
Top U. S. Problem

This headline and news bulletin from a May 1956 edition of the *San Francisco Call-Bulletin* doesn't mince words. The article quotes one of the speakers at the PTA convention in San Francisco who cited FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover as saying juvenile delinquency was the second greatest problem in the U.S., right behind the threat of communism.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers/National Education Association Nine-Point Program:

1. Bring to the attention of both organizations the importance of new media of instruction, particularly of improved audio-visual instruction.

2. Interpret and stress moral and spiritual values in education.

3. Work to cut down the competitive element in high school athletics and to discourage its extension to the junior high school and elementary grades.

4. Use every influence and resource at the command of both groups to eliminate the narcotics menace, a threat to the vitality of the nation and the well-being of youth.

5. Recognize education as a vital factor in defense and protect the schools from unjust attacks and malicious criticism.

6. Continue the effort of both organizations toward legislation and priorities to make adequate schools and their proper functioning possible in the emergency.

7. Recommend more effective local cooperation between teachers' associations and parent-teacher units.

8. Expand the emphasis upon the interdependence of peoples and the values of better world understanding.

9. Engage in teacher recruitment to encourage able persons to prepare for elementary school teaching.

Seeking cooperative partners

In 1952, Lucille P. Leonard of Rhode Island was elected National PTA president and, in cooperation with the National Education Association, launched a close study of U.S. public schools. The result of that study led to adoption of a nine-point program for the improvement of public schools, which represented the hopes and dreams of both organizations. (See column at left.)

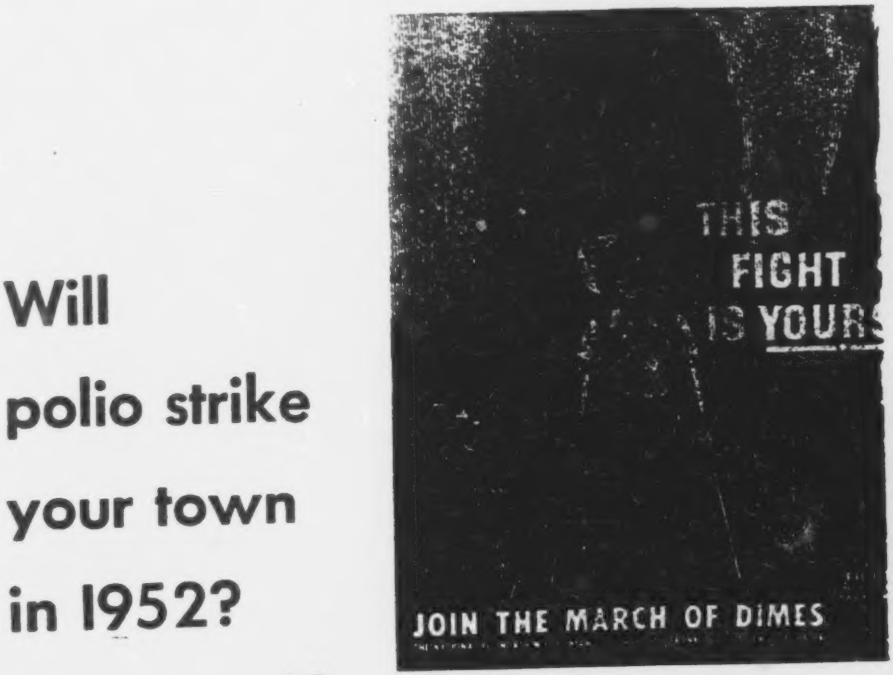
Lucille P. Leonard, preside
National Congress of Pare
and Teachers, 1952–1955

The watch on nuclear war

Throughout the 1950s, the National PTA kept a diligent watch on issues of public safety, national security, and civil defense. In the shadow of the Cold War, concern over the physical safety and emotional stability of children led th PTA to publish "Our Children and the Atom Bomb" and "Civil Defense Plan for Parent-Teache Associations." These articles called for preparing and training children in civil defense and emergency measures, including H-bomb drills at school and at home.

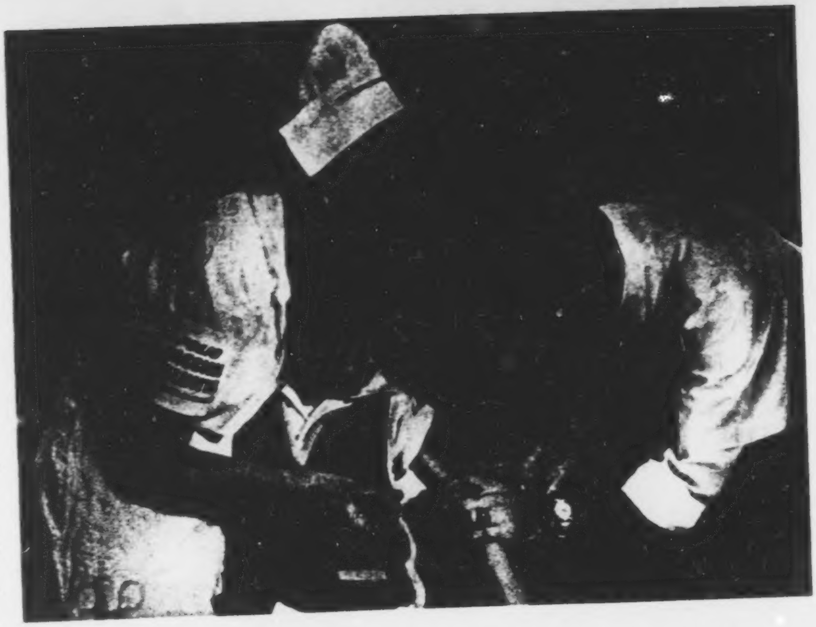
Child health breakthroughs

Polio, a major health threat to children and youth, continued unabated into the 1950s. In 1952 the number of polio cases in the United States reached an unprecedented 57,628. Each summe the media would dispatch warnings against allowing children to spend time in crowded public places where they might contract the dreaded disease. Its effects upon children could be a lifetime disability or, in far too many cases, death. Polio death tolls were announced weekly on radio news programs, and entire households were quarantined when a case of polio was diagnosed in the family.


Will polio strike your town in 1952?
THIS FIGHT IS YOUR
JOIN THE MARCH OF DIMES

This ad in support of the work of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis appeared on the back cover of the January 1952 issue of the *National Parent-Teacher.* In later years, the PTA again worked with the foundation, which had then changed its name to the March of Dimes.

By 1953, Dr. Jonas Salk and other scientists were working on a preventive measure against polio. Their breakthrough vaccine was introduced the following year. The National PTA was called upon to assist in a nationwide public relations campaign to urge participation in vaccination programs aimed at preventing the spread of polio. The PTA worked closely with the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (March of Dimes), the Red Cross, and state branches of the American Medical Association to implement the inoculation program.



The PTA conducted a vigorous public relations campaign in support of a nationwide polio vaccination program. Local PTA members across the country volunteered to help administer the vaccine to more than a million children.

The grassroots work of local PTA units across the country was essential to the tests run by Dr. Salk. It helped to garner nationwide support and acceptance of the Salk polio vaccinations. Thousands of PTA volunteer leaders assisted in the mass vaccination of more than 1.8 million children in 1954. The result was the successful nationwide distribution of the polio vaccine to millions more children by 1955.

This PTA effort laid the groundwork for other cooperative partnerships with medical associations and health organizations in the decades to come.

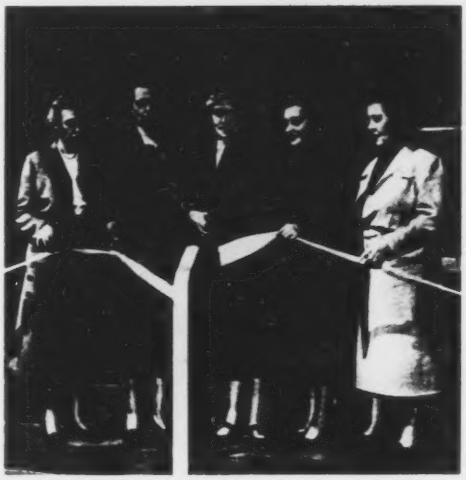
To further improve the health of the nation's children, the PTA worked throughout the 1950s to educate its members about immunization against tetanus, diphtheria, and smallpox. The National PTA and its grassroots members also worked for regulations to require that water supplies across the land be treated with fluoride to prevent rampant dental problems.

By mid-decade, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers teamed up with 20 other like-minded organizations to develop a nationwide plan to closely monitor child health care from birth through high school. The need for such a program—an expansion on the principle of the Summer Round-Up—grew in importance as the growing ranks of Baby Boom children entered the elementary schools.

Summer Round-Up efforts to secure the health of all children before they enter school were continued at the grassroots level, as witnessed by this scene in which a PTA volunteer in Fargo, North Dakota, checks on a young prekindergartner.

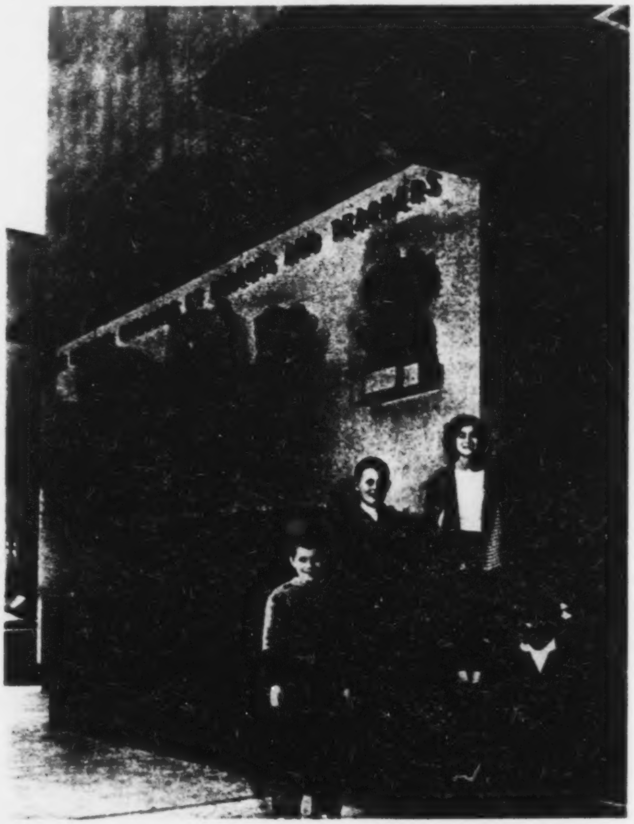
Building a national headquarters

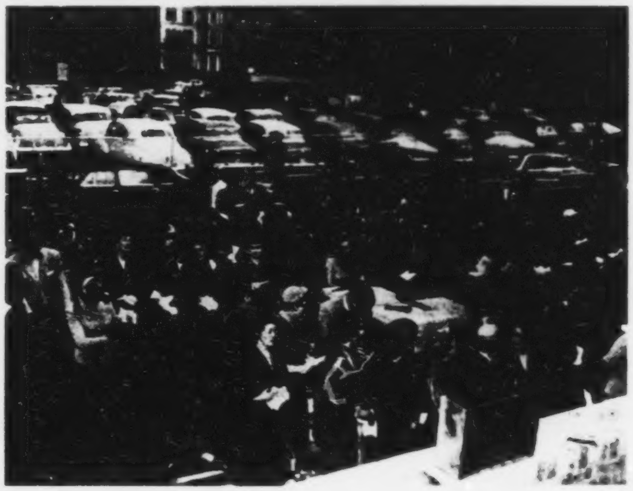
In 1950 the National Congress of Parents and Teachers purchased a site in Chicago for a permanent headquarters building. In 1953, the cornerstone was laid at 700 North Rush Street and the organization's officers and staff moved in the following year. The building was dedicated in 1955, and in 1956 it received an award for excellence in architecture from the American Institute of Architects and the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry.



National PTA President Lucille Leonard cuts the ribbon that officially opened the building in 1954. She is joined by headquarters staff members Eleanor Twiss (far left), Ruth A. Bottomly (second from left), Eva H. Grant (second from right), and Mary A. Ferre (far right).

The building at 700 N. Rush Street was home to the National PTA until November 1993, when the PTA moved its headquarters to the IBM Building in Chicago. Prominent features of the building's entrance were three bronze statues (below, left) created by Chicago sculptor Milton Horn. The statues symbolize the Mother, the Father, and the Teacher as the most important influences in children's lives.





In 1953, board members and friends gathered for the laying of the cornerstone at the 700 N. Rush Street building. The box on the ledge in the foreground was filled with PTA memorabilia commemorating the organization's achievements and sealed into the cornerstone.

A landmark ruling

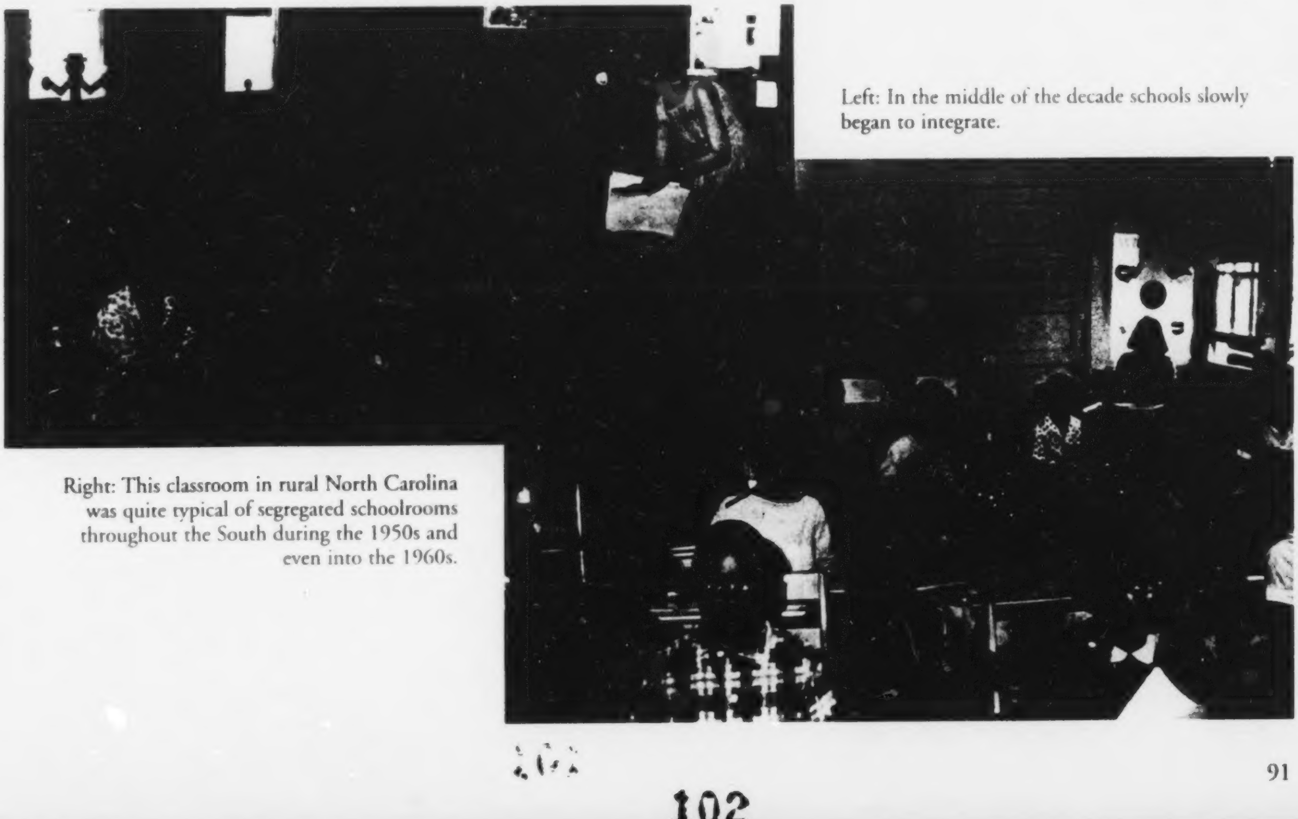
Mayme Williams was elected president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1953. Her administration would be in office during a remarkable turning point in the history of the nation—one that began in a local school in Topeka, Kansas, where an individual parent decided that the time had come for a truly equal chance at quality education for all children.

Mayme Williams, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1953–1957

Public schools in many states had long been maintained as "separate but equal for blacks and whites." But in truth, many of the schools for African-American children were a lot more separate than they were equal. Then in 1951, Oliver Brown, an African-American father, sought to enroll his daughter Linda in an "all white" Topeka school. When his child and others were denied admission, he joined in a lawsuit with twelve other families that eventually landed in the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1954, the Earl Warren-led court issued the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision that declared school segregation unconstitutional. This major ruling changed the face of U.S. public education by requiring public schools to dismantle the "separate but equal" system in effect since the late 1800s. It would take several more years of court challenges and, at times, enforced implementation by the National Guard, but the process to end legally segregated public schools had begun.

From the outset, the National Congress of Mothers had admitted into its ranks all who cared to work for the "betterment of child life." The organization championed the importance of equal opportunity for all children. In a March 1898 article from *Mother's Magazine*, Alice Birney was quoted as saying, "The National Congress of Mothers, irrespective of creed, color, or condition, stands for all parenthood, childhood, homehood. Its platform is the universe; its organization, the human race."



Left: In the middle of the decade schools slowly began to integrate.

Right: This classroom in rural North Carolina was quite typical of segregated schoolrooms throughout the South during the 1950s and even into the 1960s.

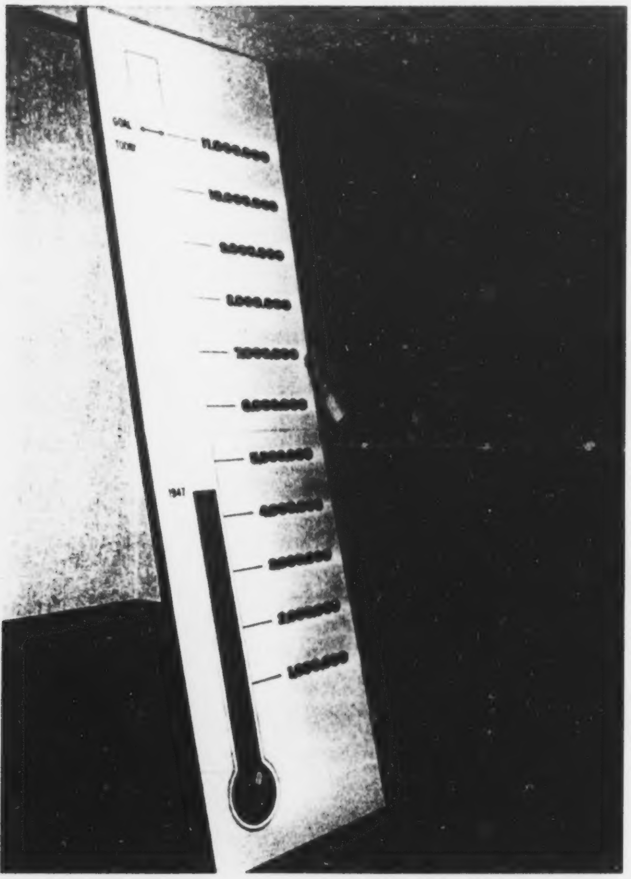
Ethel G. Brown, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1955–1958

While the National PTA never sanctioned or practiced exclusion in its membership, the realities of segregated school systems in parts of the country kept "blacks and whites" separated—even in their parent-teacher activities. Since its founding in 1926, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers had worked cooperatively with the National PTA, even modeling itself after the older sister association, adopting its objectives, sharing speakers and materials, conducting joint workshops, and establishing a joint advisory committee. Following the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* ruling, the National PTA and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers held their conventions in conjunction with one another, and there was a growing awareness that the two organizations did not need to exist separately.

As schools slowly desegregated in the 1950s and 1960s, many local units of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers dissolved and their members joined and carried out their work as part of local units of the National PTA.

When Californian Ethel G. Brown became president of the National PTA in 1955, the association's growth rate was accelerating by the addition of members from newly integrated schools. But just as some parts of the nation resisted desegregation of schools, some in the ranks of both the National PTA and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers also resisted both integration and the eventual unification that would take place.

In 1955, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers adopted a resolution offering clear support and endorsement of the Supreme Court's rulings. To help in school transitions, the resolution encouraged the formation of study groups on state and local levels. President Mayme Williams was invited on more than one occasion to witness the arrival of African-American children to newly integrated schools. She played an important role in telling the story of African-American children to government bodies. President Eisenhower appointed her to a special committee charged with the crucial task of planning a White House Conference on Education.



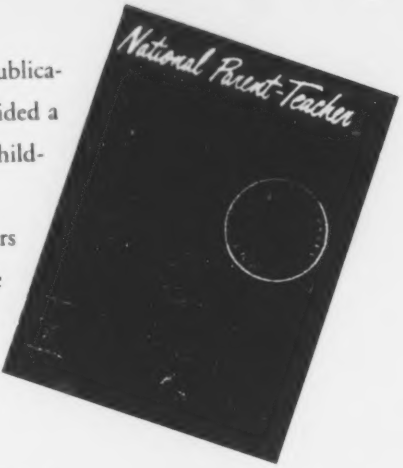
Above: National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers' President Mayme Williams (center) attends the White House Conference on Education called by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Left: President Ethel G. Brown shows off the membership monitor, which tracked membership increases during her administration.

Reaching milestones

In November 1956, the PTA magazine, *National Parent-Teacher*, celebrated 50 years of publication. Started as the *National Congress of Mothers Magazine*, the periodical had long provided a voice for the association and offered up-to-date information about the science and art of child-rearing in an increasingly complex world (see "The Voice of the PTA," p. 68).

In 1957, with Ethel Brown its president, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers celebrated its 60th anniversary. To recognize this milestone, a special commemorative album of historical data on the association and its international mission for children was presented to the United States Library of Congress.



In November 1956, the *National Parent-Teacher*, the magazine of the National PTA, celebrated its 50th anniversary with a golden jubilee issue. Over those years the magazine changed its name and format several times, from the *National Congress of Mothers Magazine* to *Child Welfare Magazine* to the *National Parent-Teacher: The P.T.A. Magazine.*

Renewed interest in curriculum

When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the world's first man-made space satellite, in October 1957, Americans awakened to the fact that U.S. scientific know-how and technological capabilities were behind those of their Soviet counterparts. The American public, accustomed to being first, demanded action. The focus of this outcry was the American education system, which was faulted for neglecting its duty to educate the nation's children effectively in the basics of science and math. Only by improving this system could America hope to compete with and surpass the Soviets.

To help the nation's education system regain its effectiveness and public support, the National PTA, now under President Karla Parker of Michigan, worked diligently to aid the U.S. Congress in passing the National Defense Education Act of 1958. This legislation sought to close the "science gap" by providing federal aid to improve science and math education. President Eisenhower also asked the National PTA to scrutinize public schools and curriculum. The result of this study was the PTA publication *Looking In On Your School.*

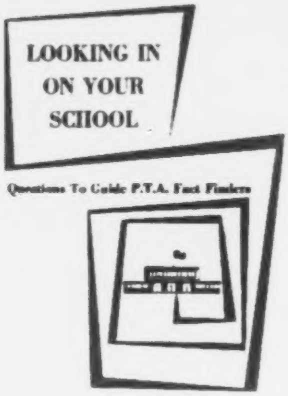
In February of 1958, the National PTA added its 52nd branch—the European Congress of American Parents, Teachers, and Students. Previously operating on its own, in 1957, the European Congress made a formal request for membership in the National PTA and was accepted

Karla Parker, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1958–1961

In response to the Soviets' launching of Sputnik in 1957, U.S. educators emphasized math and science learning at all grade levels.

Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the PTA, National PTA board member Mrs. Ralph Hobbs presents a scrapbook of memorabilia to L. Quincy Mumford of the U.S. Library of Congress as Mrs. Harold Walker, eldest daughter of Alice McLellan Birney, looks on.

the next year, following changes made to its bylaws and their approval. The newest congress represented the schools for American dependents in Germany, France, England, Italy, French Morocco, and Turkey. These schools provided education for some 60,000 children of army, air force, and navy personnel, plus those of American civilians living on military bases in the areas.


LOOKING IN
ON YOUR
SCHOOL
Questions To Guide P.T.A. Fact Finders

In 1958, the National PTA published *Looking In On Your School*, an action guide for PTA members, school professionals, and members of the community to evaluate the schools of this country for the purpose of improving them.

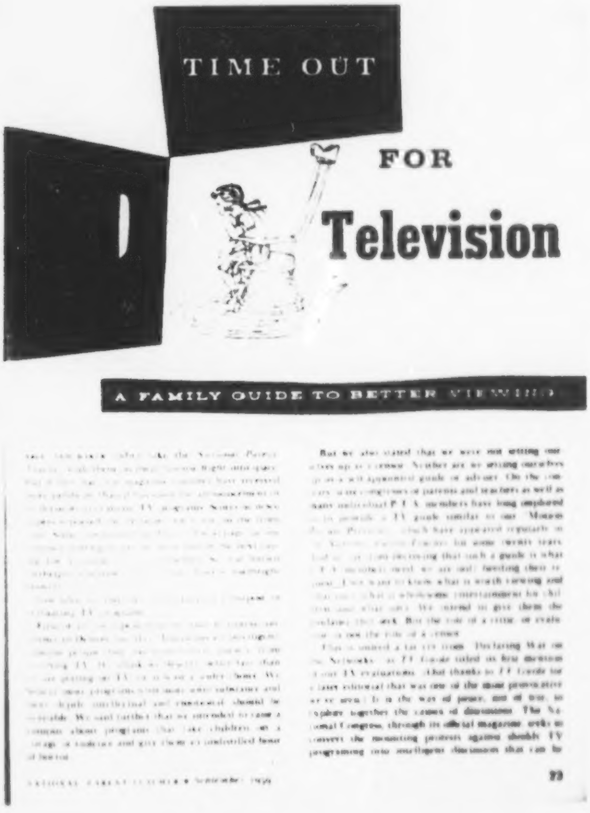
A nation turns to television

As the 1950s ended, the National PTA turned its attention once again to the influence of media on children and youth (see "Monitoring the Media and the Message," p. 96). Among the critical issues was the proliferation of pornographic materials. The PTA worked closely with the U.S. postmaster general in developing a plan to combat distribution of pornography—particularly of unsolicited materials that could wind up in the hands of children—through the mails.

But at the center of the PTA's attention stood television. With more than 14 million TV sets in American homes, the nature and subject matter of many television programs came under scrutiny by PTA members as having a negative influence on children. Many members deplored the suggestive content and gratuitous violence of too many programs.

In 1959, *National Parent-Teacher* magazine began a regular feature that would evaluate television programs and include listings, comments, and suggestions for parents. This effort would expand into the next decade as the National PTA developed action plans for its local units and families to make TV viewing a family affair.

This scene of two young girls pouring over the movie previews that appeared in the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine was not unusual. Children across America were encouraged to check the magazine for appropriate films.


TIME OUT
FOR
Television
A FAMILY GUIDE TO BETTER VIEWING

Right: "Time Out for Television: A Family Guide for Better Viewing" became a regular feature in the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine in 1959.

A turning point

At some point in the mid-1950s, the nation turned a corner…away from the heartaches and hardships of the Depression and World War II…towards new and widespread prosperity and strides in medicine and technology. Still, the United States had its challenges, among them improving school curriculum and redressing the inequities suffered by minority populations. The social upheavals that would scar the ensuing years—assassinations, war, economic distress, and government paralysis—would engage members of the PTA in both familiar and unfamiliar arenas.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

An Honorary National Life Membership is the highest honor a PTA can bestow on an individual. It is a PTA's way of recognizing a person whose service to children has been exemplary. The honoree can be a PTA member, an educator, a member of the community, or anyone else who has been an advocate for children in the areas of education, health and welfare, and legislation. Many first ladies of the United States, including Mamie Eisenhower, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, and Hillary Rodham Clinton, have been awarded the PTA's highest honor.

The program, as we know it today, has evolved from roots early in the century. In the 1908–1911 handbook of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, a life membership was one of six membership categories that the congress offered individuals—each category having a particular dues structure and accompanying privileges. The 1908 handbook stated that a life membership cost $50, which entitled the holder to vote on all questions and to receive all publications of the congress.

Later, a 1929 PTA membership pamphlet states that life memberships are distinct from active memberships and contributing memberships, with active members being dues-paying, involved members of a local association and contributing members giving $5 to support the congress' work for the current year. Here, another change appears regarding privileges of life membership. The pamphlet states that life memberships do not entitle the holders to vote or hold office, but that such members may be honored, appropriately, at state and national conventions, if desired.

As the century progressed, the program took on a different character, one of honoring and recognizing an individual's service to children. In the 1958 bylaws of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the program was identified as "Honorary" National Life Membership, and life memberships commonly were bestowed on individuals for distinguished service to children by a unit, council, district or region, or state PTA.

Traditionally, Honorary National Life Membership monies have been deposited in the National PTA Endowment Fund, a special fund established in 1915 to support the burgeoning work of the congress. Today the fund continues to finance PTA work.

Since making National Life Membership a recognition program, the PTA has honored thousands of individuals. Those who have been privileged to receive this honor are recognized as members of a distinguished PTA club, but a club that is open to all who unceasingly work to improve the lives of children and the families that support them.

MONITORING THE MEDIA AND THE MESSAGE

Over the years, the National PTA has acted as a watchdog of entertainment and mass media, calling for these industries to act with moral responsibility in the materials they produce. The association has been at the forefront of such media issues as the passage of the Federal Communications Act of 1933, the Children's Television Act of 1990, and the V-chip provisions in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as well as in monitoring unfair and deceptive radio, television, and Internet advertising targeting children.

MOTION PICTURE
previews

The PTA ran previews of current film releases in its magazine for 20 years.

As early as 1910, the national congress passed a resolution recommending the supervision of motion pictures and vaudeville by local mothers' clubs because of the influence these entertainment forms could have on children and youth. To stress how seriously the industry was perceived to need monitoring, a 1916 resolution went so far as to call for a "wise, effective method of *censoring* moving pictures."

Since that time National PTA has focused on developing materials and training programs to help parents become savvy about and vigilant of what the media offer their children.

Before the advent of television, radio had an equally pervasive influence on America's youth.

In the mid-1930s, the PTA first published its support of legislation opposing "the transportation of interstate commerce through the newspaper, periodical, news reel, photographic film, or radio of advertisements of intoxicating liquors." Over the next few decades, the PTA maintained it position adding its opposition to advertisement of alcoholic beverages on television and use of alcohol in television programming.

In 1942, *National Parent-Teacher* magazine began to feature "Motion Picture Previews" to identify movies with appropriate content for children and youth. During the 1950s, other articles kept parents apprised of "How to Live with TV" (as one article was titled) and other potentially unwholesome sources of entertainment such as comic books. By 1959, the magazine featured TV program evaluations.

Two resolutions were passed in the 1960s calling for the entertainment and mass media industries to improve their products. The first, in 1962, demanded better quality in motion pictures and their advertising. The second, in 1965, appealed for moral responsibility in and by the mass media.

The PTA passed a resolution in 1975 demanding that the TV industry reduce the amount of violent programming broadcast to U.S. households.

In 1962, the PTA published *Mass Media and the PTA*, a booklet that explained the rights and responsibilities of individuals to advise the media of their expectations for quality programming. The booklet listed questions for parents to use to gauge the suitability of any program for their children, such as: Does the program encourage worthwhile ideas, values, and beliefs? Does it have artistic qualities? Is the language suitable? Does it appeal to the age group at which it is directed? Through this endeavor, the PTA continued to support parental involvement in the choices they and their children would make in responding to the effects of mass media—particularly television. Within a decade, the PTA would express its concern over a new media player—the cable television industry.

In 1976, the National PTA initiated a nationwide project to combat violence on television through boycotts of sponsors' products; petitions to station managers; and letter writing campaigns to local stations, networks, and the FCC. The project led to the establishment of the PTA TV Action Center which offered training to PTAs on how to monitor television programming. To support this training, the center published a *TV Program Review Guide*. Over the following years, TV viewing skills workshops were conducted around the country. From that point, the center began to develop a school curriculum to teach viewing skills directly to students.

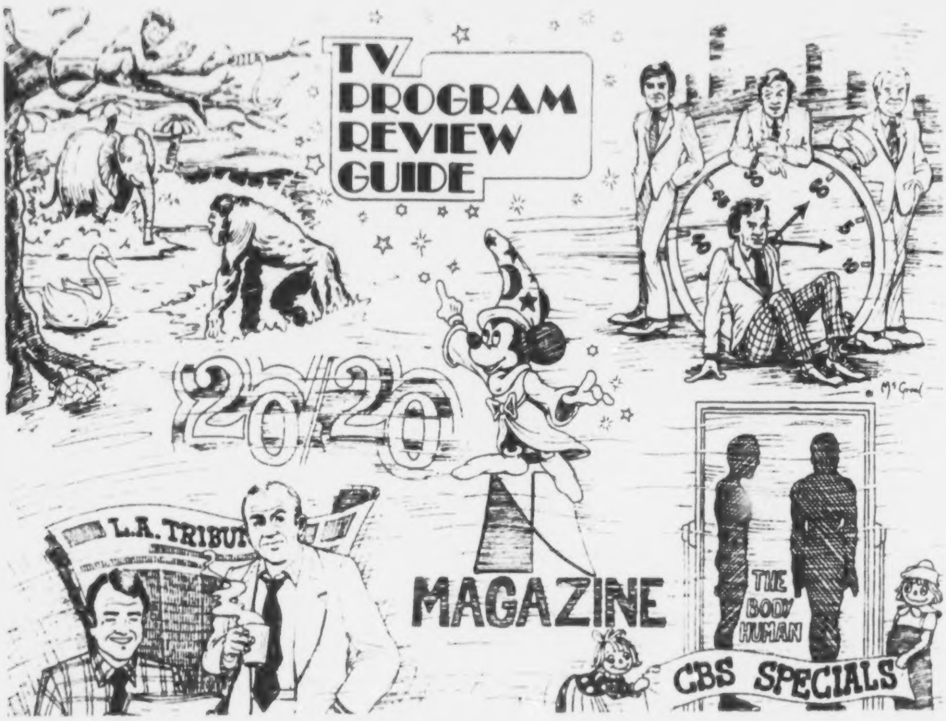
By the early 1980s, the PTA expanded its media monitoring activities to recognize quality television with Awards for Outstanding Family Programming. Before long the association formed a TV Review Panel to evaluate programs for which television producers sought PTA recommendation. In 1982, the series *Wild Kingdom* received the PTA's first recommendation.

Intent on providing materials to inform parents of the role they could play in television monitoring, the National PTA in 1981 copublished with Boys Town a brochure titled *Children and Television: What Parents Can Do*. Throughout the 1980s, the PTA voiced its concern over children's access to unrated videos, video games, and other interactive media.

Are you concerned
about the effects of
television on your children?
Now is the time to do something about it.
Your PTA can help establish a

National PTA
Television Action Center

The PTA TV Action Center, located at the PTA headquarters in Chicago in the late '70s, provided information to members regarding appropriate, nonviolent TV shows.



One of the products of the PTA TV Action Center was the *TV Program Review Guide*, which listed the best and worst prime-time TV shows for families.

The PTA and children's programming won a victory in 1990, when the U.S. Congress passed the Children's Television Act. The act required stations to air educational shows as a condition of license renewal, limited the number of commercials per hour in children's programs, and established funding for children's programming through a national endowment.

August 1, 1996, marked a first in the history of telecommunications. The FCC voted to set a minimum standard for children's educational programming of at least three hours a week. Although the National PTA had pushed for at least one hour per day during prime viewing hours, the agreement represented more than four years of PTA letter writing, phone calls, work with community organizations, and other advocacy efforts to secure passage of the act.

The PTA revitalized its TV viewing training workshops of the 1970s with a 1994 large-scale critical viewing workshop project called Taking Charge of Your TV. The high demand for these workshops has taken PTA volunteer trainers—and their coun-

Above: In the '80s, the PTA cooperated with Boys Town in Nebraska to publish this brochure to help parents regulate their children's TV-viewing habits.

Left: The Children's Television Act of 1990 sounded a victory for the PTA and other advocates of quality programming for children, since it required TV stations to air educational programs for children and families or risk losing their licenses.

terparts from Cable in the Classroom and the National Cable Television Association—to hundreds of communities around the country.

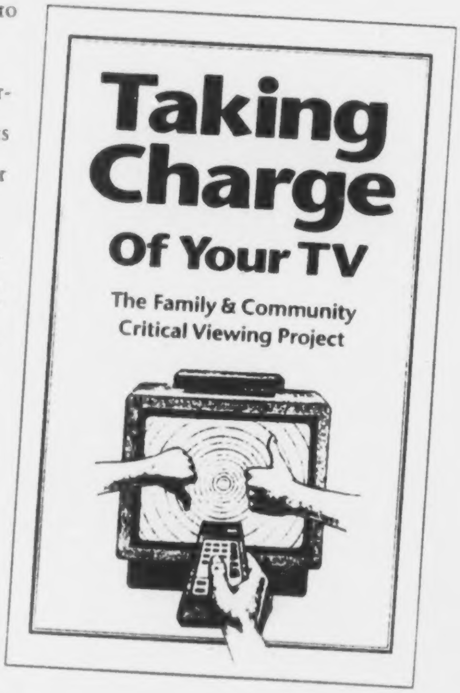
When the landmark Telecommunications Act became law in February 1996, it carried a provision for a V-chip—a technology advocated by the PTA that enables parents to block specific TV programs from being viewed by their children—and a directive for the broadcast industry to develop a new program ratings system.

When the broadcast industry released its plans for an *age-based* television rating system the following year, the PTA enlisted its grassroots members to influence the FCC to require a *content-based* television rating system that could tell parents more about what violence, sexual content, or offensive language existed in a program than would an age-based system.

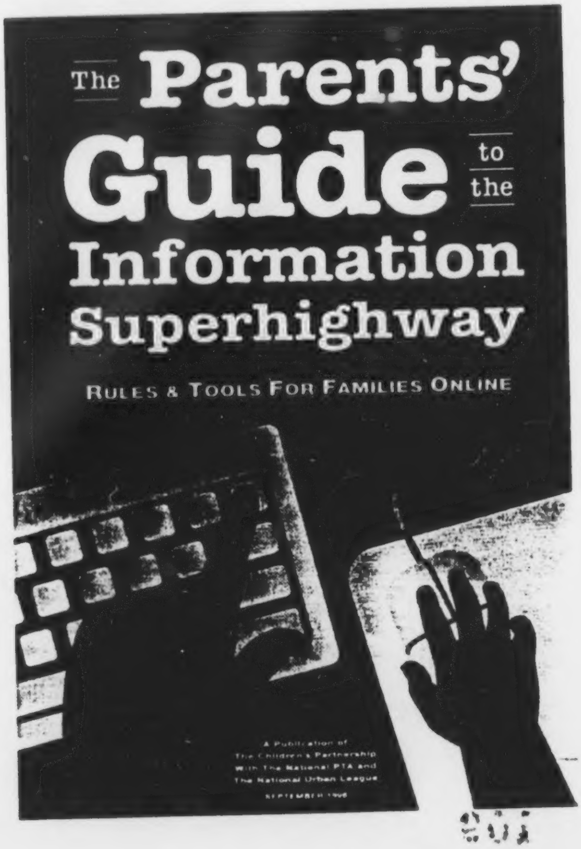
In support of new FDA regulations on the sale of tobacco products, the PTA partnered with the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids in 1997 to support a nationwide education program to curb advertising, marketing, and sales of tobacco products to children and minors.

Responding to the surge of online media in the 1990s and increased Internet use by families and schools, the PTA worked with the Children's Partnership and the National Urban League to release the booklet *The Parents' Guide to the Information Superhighway: Rules and Tools for Families Online* in September 1996.

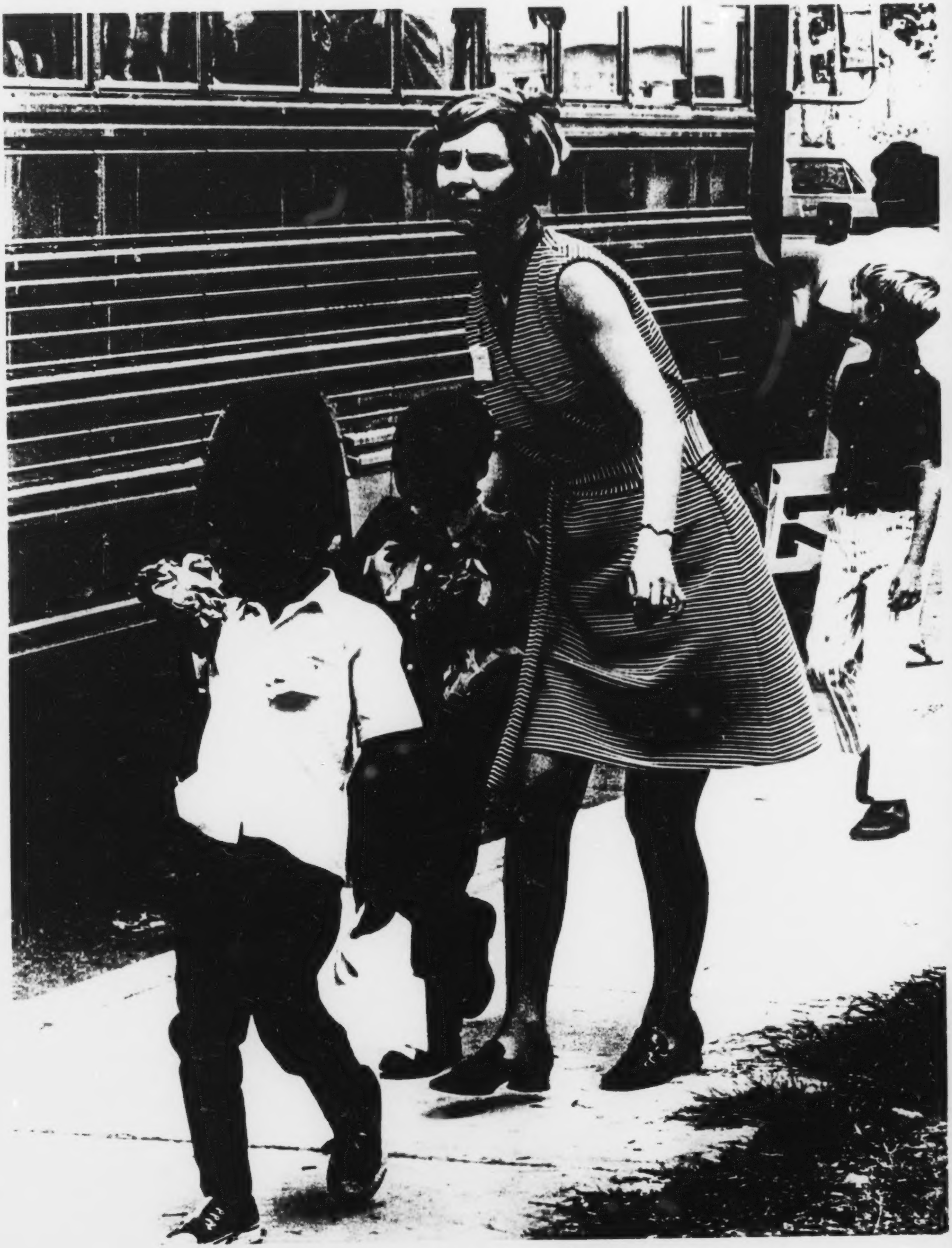
As new media unfold and technology continues to change the way children receive and access information, the National PTA continues to educate families, schools, and communities about the effects of media on children.


Taking Charge Of Your TV
The Family & Community Critical Viewing Project

In 1994, the National PTA partnered with the National Cable Television Association and Cable in the Classroom on a project to train parents to view TV critically. *Taking Charge of Your TV* continues today as an expanding and viable project of the PTA.

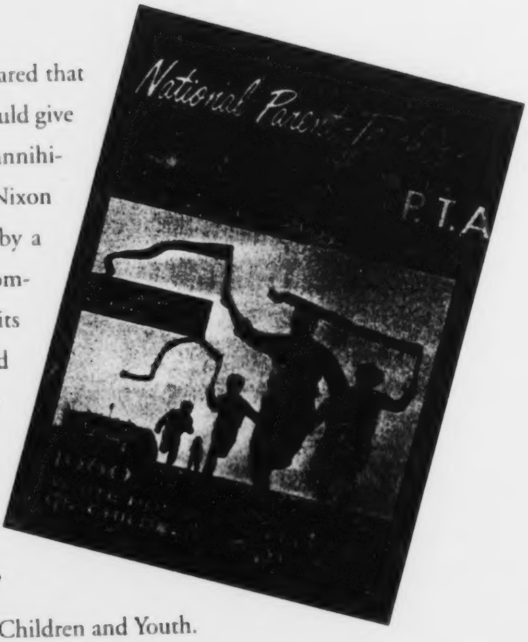

The Parents' Guide to the Information Superhighway
RULES & TOOLS FOR FAMILIES ONLINE
A Publication of The Children's Partnership With The National PTA and The National Urban League
SEPTEMBER 1996

Left: This publication, a joint effort of the PTA, the Children's Partnership, and the National Urban League, is a handbook for parents and families on exploring and using the Internet.



1960–1969

When the United States entered the 1960s, Americans still feared that the Cold War could bring nuclear holocaust. Technology could give us instant communication, instant gratification, or instant annihilation. A presidential election pitted the young Vice President Richard Nixon against an even younger Senator John F. Kennedy. When Kennedy won by a whisker, the nation turned to a new frontier of possibilities. Of all the accomplishments of the decade, perhaps the most astonishing would come at its conclusion with the technological feat of landing a man on the moon—and bringing him safely home. But it was also a decade that would end with the United States caught in a quagmire of war, scandal, assassinations, and strife strong enough to shake the foundations of American democracy.



The 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth called by President Eisenhower marked the sixth such conference in this century, the purpose of which was to provide increased educational, health, and safety opportunities for all children and youth.

A growing organization coping with societal change

President Karla Parker was appointed to the White House Conference on Children and Youth. Joining her at the conference were Ethel Kight, president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, and Ethel Brown, immediate past president of the National PTA. This golden anniversary of the White House Conferences—which had started during the Taft administration—sought to keep children's concerns high on the national agenda.

The 1960 event highlighted child safety issues. In response, the National PTA produced an automotive safety filmstrip titled *One to Grow On* for distribution throughout the local units.

The 1960s

U.S. presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon

Headlines: Soviets shoot down U.S. U2 spy plane; Kennedy-Nixon debates elevate role of TV in politics; Cuban missile crisis; J.F.K., Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy assassinated; Lyndon Johnson unveils "Great Society"; Race riots in Watts, Cleveland, Newark, Detroit; Vietnam War and protests escalate; New 50-star U.S. flag; Neil Armstrong walks on moon

Daily life: Americans own 85 million TVs; U.S. spends more than $26.2 billion for public school education ($654 per student); U.S. population: 179 million; Average income: $7,475; Average public school teacher's income: $6,605; Average home: $25,500; Loaf of bread: 21¢; Gallon of gas: 61¢; Electronic calculator: $1,950

Movies: Psycho, West Side Story, Lawrence of Arabia, Cleopatra, Dr. Strangelove, Mary Poppins, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Bonnie and Clyde, Funny Girl!, The Odd Couple, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Hard Day's Night, Midnight Cowboy

Books: To Kill a Mockingbird, Catch-22, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, The Guns of August, In Cold Blood, Rosemary's Baby, The Godfather

TV: Steve Allen, Dick Van Dyke, The Fugitive, Ed Sullivan, I Dream of Jeannie, Mission: Impossible, Hawaii Five-O, Marcus Welby, I Love Lucy, Brady Bunch, Huntley/Brinkley

Art & music: The Beatles; Woodstock; Motown bigger than ever; Op-Art

On Broadway: Oliver, Hello Dolly, Fiddler on the Roof, Hair, Cabaret

Popular songs: I Wanna Hold Your Hand, My Girl, Moon River, Born Free, Purple Haze, Satisfaction, Blowin' in the Wind, My Generation, Good Vibrations, Truckin', Hey Jude

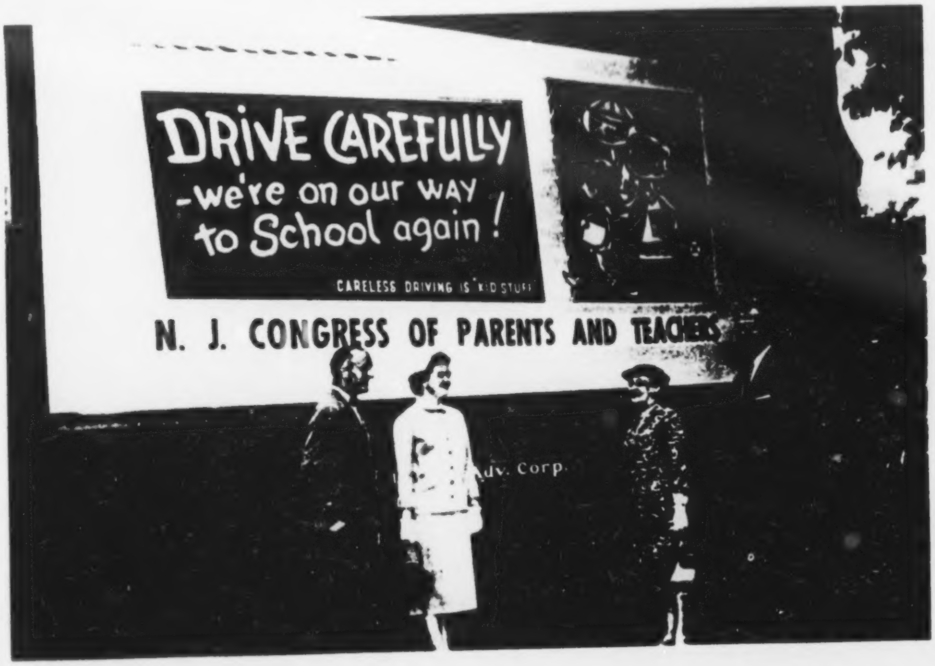
What's new? Lasers, felt-tip pens, IBM Selectric typewriters, aluminum cans, "The Pill," bell bottoms, Lava lamps

During the conference, Mrs. Kight was selected to serve on the executive committee of the Council of National Organizations.

Ethel W. Kight, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1957–1961

Margaret E. Jenkins, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1961–1964

In 1961, Margaret Jenkins of New York became National PTA president and turned her attention towards increasing the association's communication with its members. First, *National Parent-Teacher* magazine, under editor Eva Grant, was given a name change to *PTA Magazine* and began featuring more articles on a wider range of child-rearing topics. It also incorporated guest feature stories by such prominent authors and public figures as U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, newscaster Richard C. Hottelet, United Nations Ambassador


DRIVE CAREFULLY
-we're on our way to School again!
CARELESS DRIVING IS KID STUFF
N. J. CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
dv. Corp.

WATCH OUT FOR U
DONT CLOWN WHEN YOU CROSS THE STREET
USE A LIGHT AT

Above and left: Child safety was one of the issues the White House Conference on Children and Youth addressed—an issue that the PTA had espoused throughout its history. In the late '50s, for example, the PTA promoted traffic safety education through many of its state congresses.

Henry Cabot Lodge, and Democratic presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson II. During the 1960s, *PTA Magazine* circulation grew to the largest in its history.

Also in 1961, the PTA commissioned a film—*Where Children Come First*—for general distribution as a means for disseminating the PTA story and values to the widest audience possible.

Mrs. Jerome (Thelma S.) Morris became president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1961. Her leadership team chose the theme "Balanced PTA Program, a Challenge." That year, the association's national headquarters was moved from Dover, Delaware, to Atlanta, Georgia, its original home.

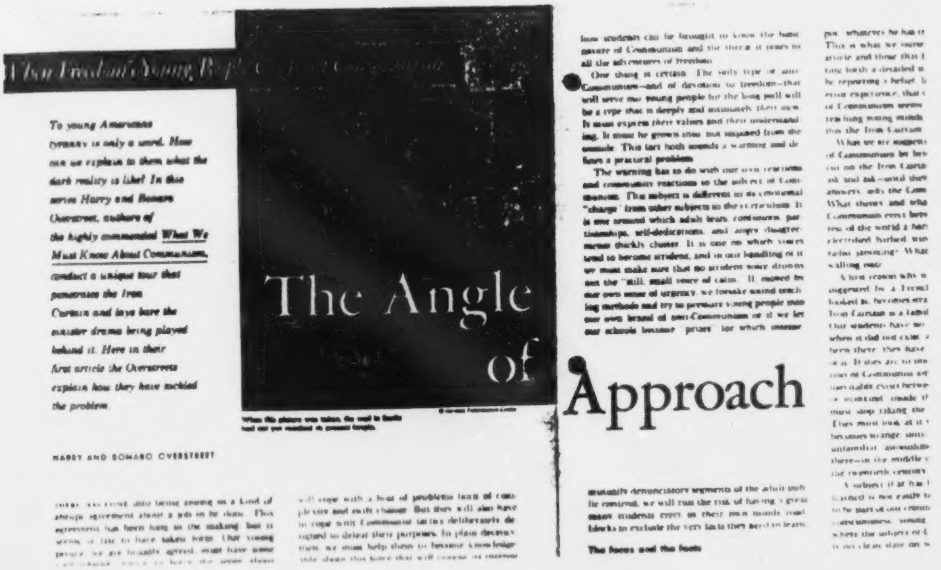
Thelma S. Morris, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1961–1964

Meanwhile, the Cold War heated up considerably in 1962. The Cuban missile crisis found President Kennedy going "eyeball-to-eyeball" with the Soviets. The raising of the Berlin Wall symbolized the division and distrust among the world's major power blocs. And communist advances in Cuba and Southeast Asia left most Americans with an uneasy concern over the world they would leave to their children.

That year, delegates to the annual National PTA Convention passed a resolution providing for more child education about communism. In *PTA Magazine*, regular articles about the communist threat were added to more traditional content of children's health, education issues, and cultural issues.

CORAL
ANNIVERSARY
HISTORY
National Congress
of
Colored Parents
and Teachers

The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers celebrated its 35th year with the publication of the *Coral Anniversary History*, which told the story of the congress from its inception.

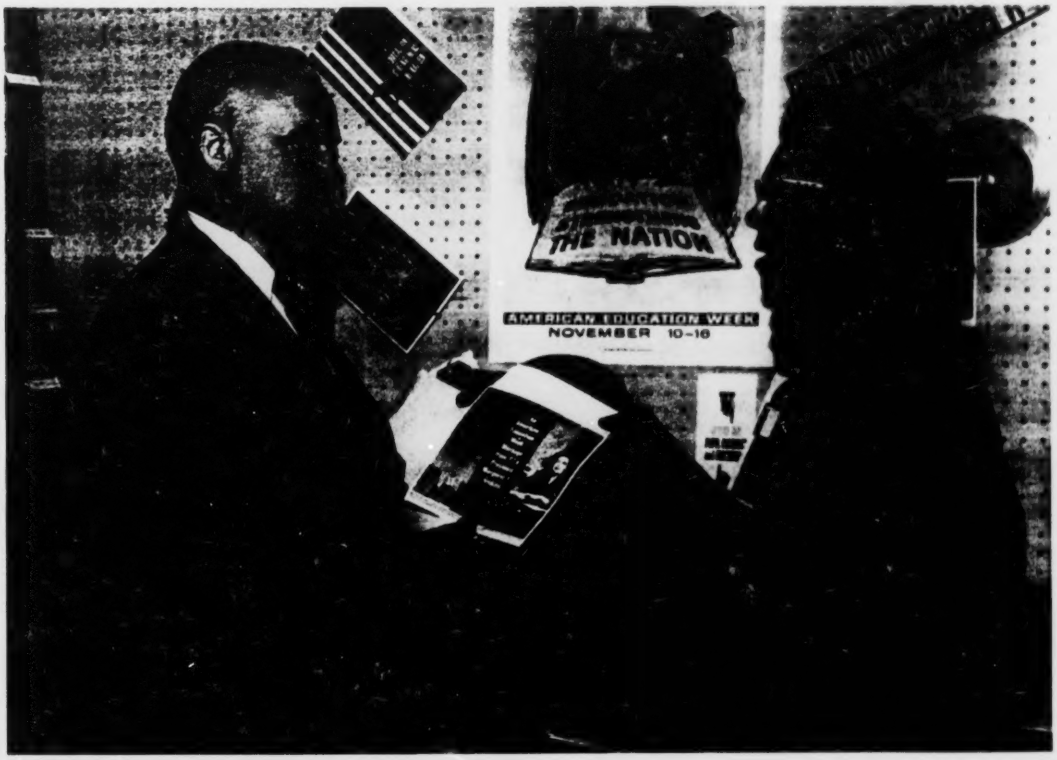


To young Americans tyranny is only a word. How can we explain to them what the dark reality is like? In this series Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, authors of the highly commended What We Must Know About Communism, conduct a unique tour that penetrates the Iron Curtain and lays bare the sinister drama being played behind it. Here in their first article the Overstreets explain how they have tackled the problem.

The Angle of Approach

HARRY AND BONARO OVERSTREET

By 1962, the Cold War had heated up with the raising of the Berlin Wall and the U.S.'s entanglement in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Communism was seen as a threat to freedom and democracy. This situation prompted the PTA to pass a resolution at its 1962 convention advocating that this country's children and youth be alerted to the threat of communism.



The PTA has been a cosponsor of American Education Week since 1938. Here, PTA President Margaret Jenkins presents her Education Week message to Frank W. Hubbard of the National Education Association, which created the week long observance.

Jennelle V. Moorhead, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1964–1967

Where there's smoke...

Delegates to the 1964 convention resolved that all PTA units cooperate in educating children and youth about the health hazards of cigarette smoking. Despite increasing recognition of the addictive nature of smoking, and the associated health problems, the antismoking message needed continual repetition and reamplification as yet another generation of adolescents began experimenting with cigarettes.

As Jennelle Moorhead of Oregon took over the National PTA presidency, her administration launched a hard-hitting campaign against smoking by children. By 1966, the PTA had won approval and funding from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to begin a project enlisting the assistance of parents, preteens, and teens in a prevention campaign. The hope was to educate and inspire young people to become the nation's first "smokeless generation...that would be spared the sickness, disability or premature death which may result from cigarette smoking."

The National PTA published information about the dangers of smoking in a variety of places—*PTA Magazine*, multilingual pamphlets and bulletins, news releases, and public service announcements for media. To strengthen the resources and support the National PTA could offer, it added health professionals to the staff to provide guidelines, publicity, informational materials, and assistance in implementing programs within local PTA units.

Ultimately, to emphasize the thrust of the campaign—to prevent a child from taking the very first smoke—the publication *His First Cigarette May Be a Matter of Life or Death* was distributed as a benchmark piece to all local PTA units.

LOWER BUCKS AREA COUNCIL OF PT
TEENAGE
Smoking
JAMIN FRANKLIN
JR. HIGH
SCHOOL
BRISTOL
TWP. PENN

MORE LUNG CANCER

his
first cigarette
may be
A
MATTER
OF LIFE
OR DEATH

Top, above: Students, parents, and teachers joined the PTA's nationwide campaign to prevent smoking among preteens and teens.

Right: This publication became a cornerstone of the PTA's campaign to prevent a youngster from taking that first puff.

Minnie J. Hitch (Mebane) president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1964–1967

Claiming the middle ground

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers reached mid-decade with a membership just short of 12 million—the highest in its history. Those numbers were important in a new battle, this time against extremism. While the National PTA recognized that communism represented one extreme, the association became increasingly aware that the rising ultraconservative ideology of the far right represented a danger that was equally real and extreme.

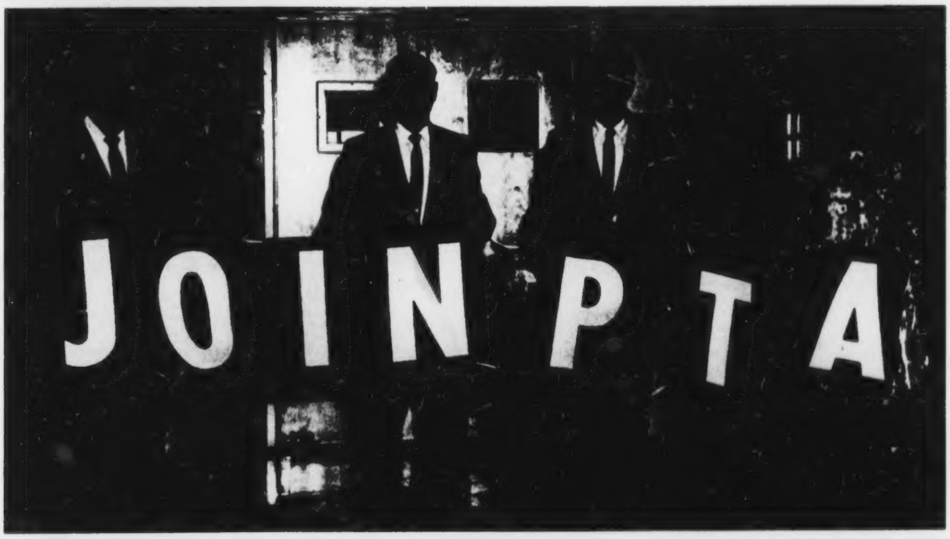
In 1965 the National PTA published *Extremist Groups: A Clear and Present Danger to Freedom and Democracy.* The association received high-profile media coverage but also came under attack from extremist groups for taking a middle ground position between competing social philosophies. The National PTA nonetheless maintained its position and philosophy during the ensuing era of social unrest, protests, student disaffection, and social upheaval.

Minnie J. Hitch [known more recently as Minnie Hitch Mebane] took over as president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1964, and chose a theme of global cooperation, "Aspiring for One World."

Lyndon Johnson had succeeded to the U.S. presidency after John Kennedy's assassination and slowly became embroiled in the growing Vietnam War and the protests surrounding that involvement. At home, he was more successful in winning passage of expanding social programs to reach all the citizens of an increasingly doubting country.

Despite riots in some areas because of racial tensions, integration proceeded effectively enough to see many local units of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers merge with local PTA units.

The 1964 convention of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers chose a theme of unity—"Aspiring for One World."



By 1965 PTA membership had soared to almost 12 million.

Extremist Groups
A Clear and Present Danger to Freedom and Democracy

Above left: The PTA published this brochure to protect the democratic interests of the organization.

Above right and right: Throughout the 1960s, integration proceeded effectively enough to see many local units of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers merge with local PTA units.

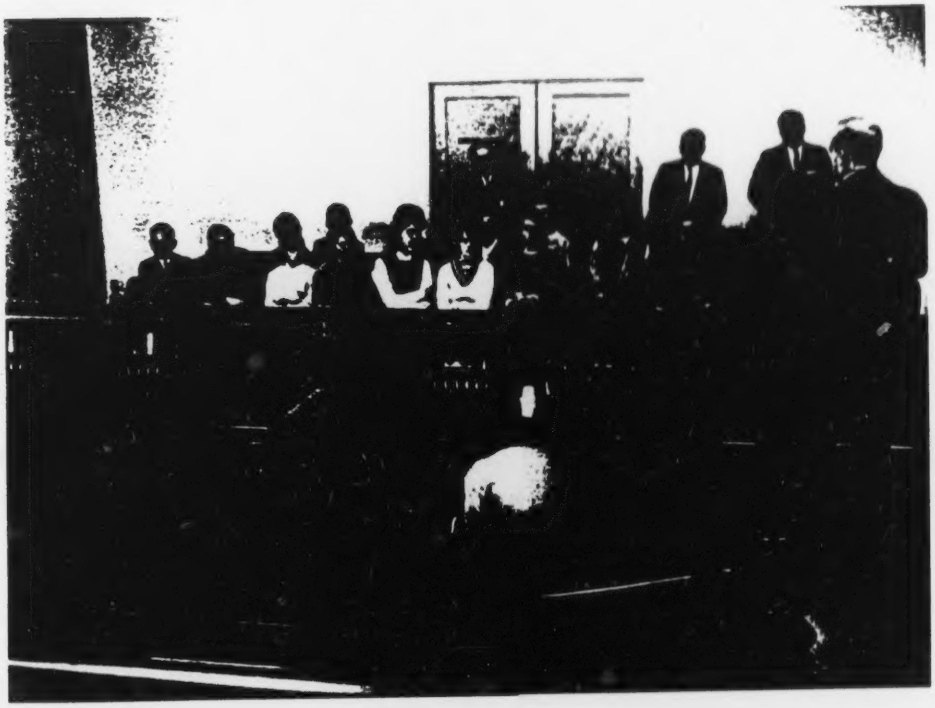
Building upon the longtime track record of cooperation, in 1966, the two associations began formal talks about unification. The National PTA registered the terms *PTA* and *Parent-Teacher Association* as service marks with the U.S. government.

Elizabeth Hendryson became National PTA president in 1967, the same year Clara B. Gay was elected president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. "Happy" Gay would be the last NCCPT president, the end of her administration marking the culmination of the two associations' work to formally merge in 1970. In the planning, it was determined that all past presidents of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers would be recognized as part of the National PTA.

That same year, Sears Roebuck Foundation became closely allied with National PTA efforts at improving the judicial treatment of children. The company sponsored a study to plan the Conference on Judicial Concern for Children in Trouble in conjunction with the National Juvenile Court Foundation. The conference was held in Chicago in 1968. (See "Bringing Justice to Juveniles" p. 110.)

Elizabeth S. Hendryson, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1967–1969

Clara B. Gay, president, National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1967–1970



The Poor, the School, and the PTA

National PTA

Above: PTA delegates to the 1967 National PTA Convention recommended that the PTA work with impoverished communities to create better home-school relations in those areas.

Thanks to the PTA, junior high school students learn about the family court in Providence, Rhode Island. Programs like this one supported the National PTA's efforts on behalf of juvenile justice.

In 1968, the delegates voted to shorten national officers' terms to two years. The National PTA, with the assistance of an advisory council, launched an ambitious and wide-ranging series of conferences and regional meetings focused on children's emotional health. Additional initiatives were offered addressing child automotive safety and continuing to emphasize smoking prevention.

In 1969, the PTA began an intensive study of the effects of poverty on children in America, and later in the year published *The Poor, the School, and the PTA*, which offered ways that PTA membership could provide hope and guidance for children of impoverished inner cities and rural areas.

Mary Lou Anderson, PTA arts education advocate and founder of the Reflections Program

NATIONAL PTA REFLECTIONS PROGRAM

"Without the Arts, education is paltry indeed!" So stated Mary Lou Anderson, a leading PTA arts education advocate and the founder of Reflections, National PTA's long-running arts in education program.

Initiated in 1969, the Reflections Program invites children of local PTA units to submit their original works in literature, musical composition, photography, and the visual arts to their local units for fun, recognition, and possible honors at other PTA levels.

Reflections is an expression of the PTA's belief that arts education is central to learning and, as research reveals, an important stimulant of crucial thought processes. (See "Reflections," p. 143.)

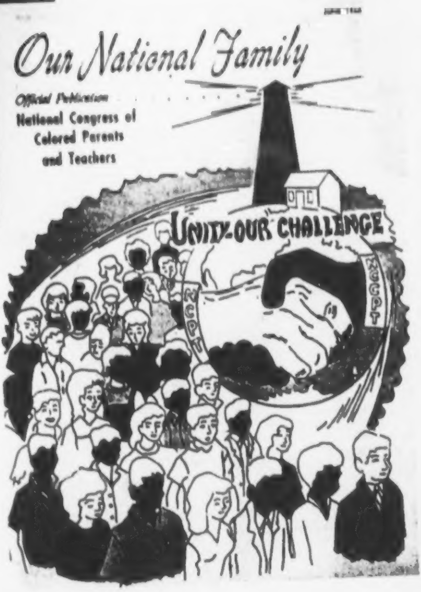
As the day of the official merger drew closer, scattered groups within each association registered concern over how one organization could address each association's distinct needs as well as the two separate groups had. In 1969, Pearl Price of Texas became president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers President Clara Gay was appointed to the sister association's board of managers.

Pearl Price, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1969–1971

Mesdames Price and Gay shared many of the concerns of their members. However, they felt that the greater good would come from working together. These women persisted because both knew the importance of *each* child. They succeeded because they represented associations committed to the care and well-being of *all* children.

As a new decade dawned, the two associations—now one—would speak with one voice in matters concerning the child, demonstrating to the nation, at a time when racial strife often disrupted efforts at integration, that commitment to a common vision can be the drawing force that binds us together.

From this new, unified position, the National PTA would enter a wildly reverberating decade, one in which war and politics would tear the social fabric of America.



Above: In the last half of the '60s the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and the National PTA began formal talks about unifying the two groups.

Right: This issue of *Our National Family*, the magazine of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, focused on unity, which proved to be a challenge for the sister associations as their members began to integrate with one another.

BRINGING JUSTICE TO JUVENILES

If the PTA is driven by the needs of children, it makes sense that juveniles in trouble would get special attention from this association built upon caring.

Throughout its history the PTA has worked to protect the rights of children in trouble.

Far from being a new development, the neediness of "delinquent" children has held the attention of the National PTA since earliest days. In fact, the third PTA Object is "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth." In 1899, PTA convention delegates passed their first resolution addressing the way youngsters were handled in the judicial system by calling for extension of the relatively new concept of juvenile courts and probation systems. Up until that time, juveniles committing even minor offenses would find themselves locked up with adult offenders, including violent criminals and other felons. Judge Ben B. Lindsey, who would come to serve as chair of the PTA's Committee on Juvenile Courts and Probation from 1905 to 1922, compared early practices to the new philosophy being put into action during this time:

> The great fundamental change that has come over us is this: The proceeding that was formerly to protect property has become one to protect the child....Concretely, when the little boy of twelve was sentenced to be hanged at the Old Bailey Criminal Court of London, in 1833, for stealing a shawl—the proceeding was rather to save the old shawl. Now we have put the boy above the shawl.

As early as 1903 the National PTA established a Committee on Juvenile Courts and Probation renamed the Committee on Juvenile Protection in 1922. Its pioneering work in establishing the juvenile court brought the association recognition in the early 1900s: "There is no one factor that has done more to advance its humanitarian work than the National Congress of Mothers," commented Judge Lindsey.

Across the decades, at all association levels, the PTA has worked to promote appropriate treatment of wayward children by their schools and states, as well as for continuing improvement of juvenile court procedures.

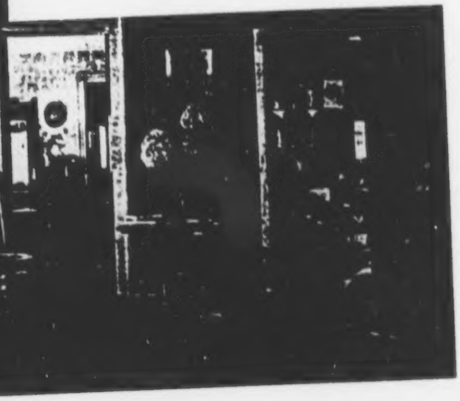
The National PTA took this concern to a new level in 1954, when Bertram M. Beck, director of the Special Delinquency Project, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, delivered an address explaining his bureau project's "New Approaches to Juvenile Delinquency" before national convention delegates. Stirred by the message, delegates voted to suspended convention rules prohibiting the presentation of resolutions from the floor in order to state their position favoring that the activities of this two-year project not end, but be incorporated as a regular part of the Children's Bureau and calling for appropriations to meet the cost of this expanded program.

Then in 1957, the PTA published *What PTA Members Should Know About Juvenile Delinquency: Guide for Action.* This booklet offered concrete courses of action for PTAs and communities to undertake to curtail the causes of juvenile delinquency. The guide encouraged PTAs to determine where their efforts could be directed, whether in strengthening community services for children and families; conducting parent and family life education study groups; investigating existing inadequacies in housing and job opportunities for parents; advocating for decent recreation facilities; discovering what support police departments, probation officers, and juvenile court judges could use; or supporting special efforts to reach hard-to-reach youth.

On the federal front, the PTA successfully supported legislation, signed by President Kennedy in 1961, for a program of grants for anti-delinquency projects. This Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act authorized $10 million a year for three fiscal years—1962 through 1964—in grants for pilot projects, training programs, and studies on juvenile delinquency. States, municipalities, public agencies, and nonprofit private groups were eligible for the assistance.

Yet, in the mid-1960s, despite all the effort the PTA had put into changing the juvenile court system from one that punished youngsters as though they were adults into one that protected and rehabilitated them, the association was informed by the National Council of Juvenile Court Judges (NCJCJ) that "many juvenile court judges were not qualified by training or experience to function effectively in the complicated area of guaranteeing justice to juveniles."

Above: A Washington State "outward bound" type program, an alternative to incarceration for young people.

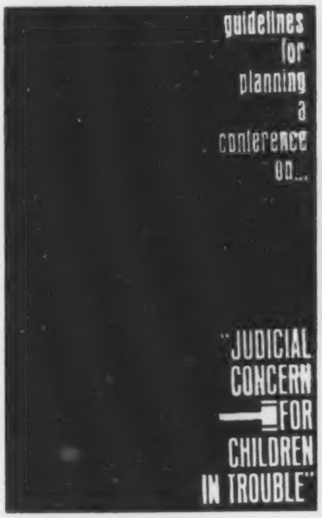


Above and right: These photos of the exterior and interior of a juvenile detention home in Pennsylvania appeared in *Child Welfare Magazine* in November, 1910. The national congress advocated for separate and more humane facilities for housing juvenile offenders as compared to their adult counterparts.

Recognizing that the PTA was an effective adult education organization, a judicial representative begged Mrs. Aaron E. Margulis, then chair of the PTA's Committee on Juvenile Protection, to rouse local units to use their influence to get their local judges and other court officials to attend training workshops.

From that point on, the PTA intensified its efforts on studying and improving the juvenile justice system. Between September 1964 and March 1966, the National PTA cosponsored four regional conferences with NCJCJ on Judicial Concern for Children in Trouble. These meetings served a threefold purpose:

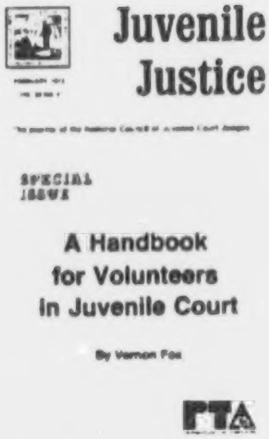
- To acquaint PTA leaders with juvenile courts and their procedures
- To stimulate local interest in the community problems concerning juvenile courts
- To inform PTA leaders of possible courses of action to help solve the problems of children in trouble



guidelines
for
planning
a
conference
on...

"JUDICIAL
CONCERN
FOR
CHILDREN
IN TROUBLE"

A 1967 publication created jointly by the National PTA and the National Juvenile Court Foundation with a grant from the Sears, Roebuck Foundation.



Juvenile
Justice

SPECIAL
ISSUE

A Handbook
for Volunteers
in Juvenile Court

By Vernon Fox

PTA

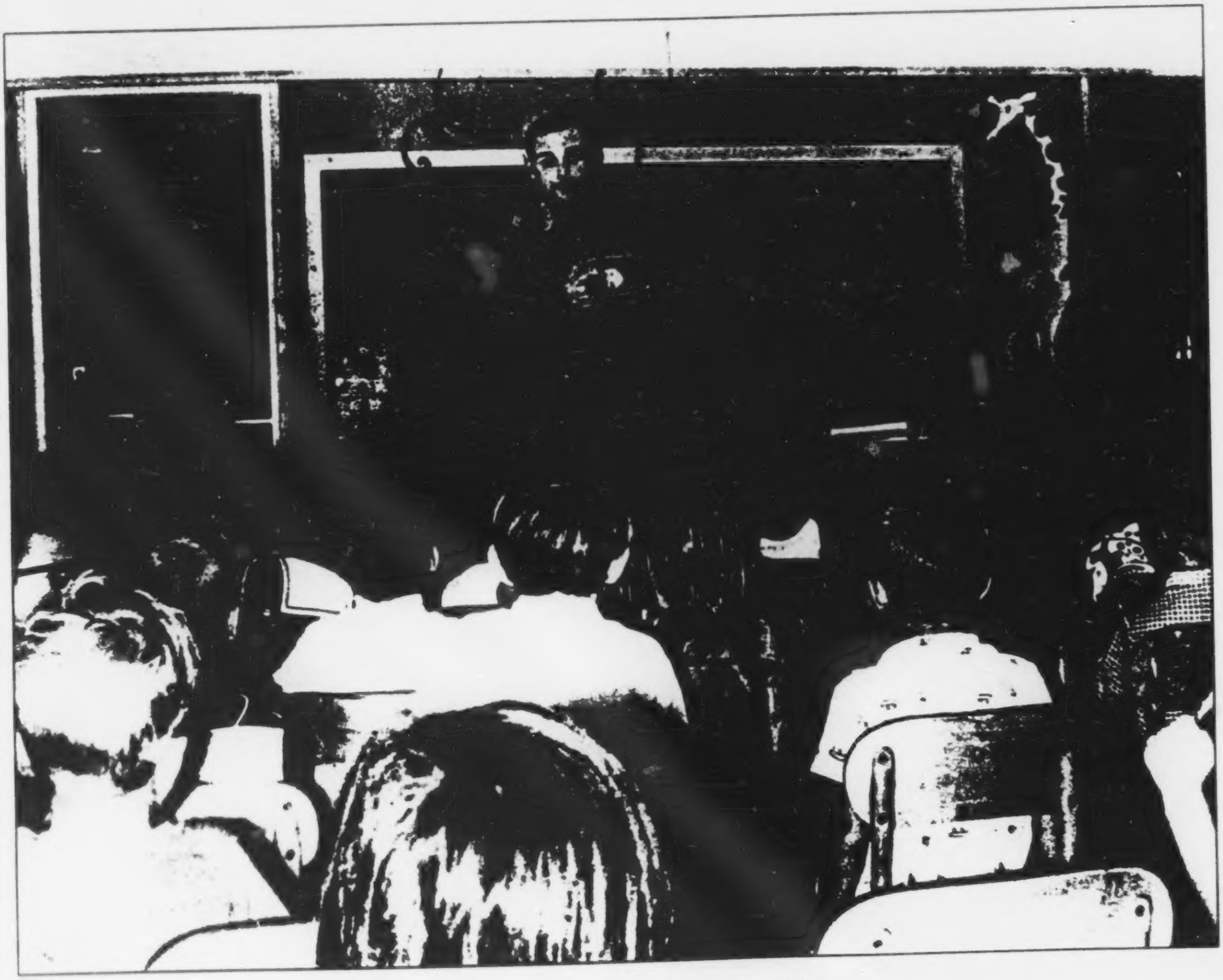
The PTA cooperated with the National Council of Juvenile Court Judges on the publication of this handbook.

The National PTA's cooperative relationship with NCJCJ continued into the '70s. In 1973 the two groups copublished *Juvenile Justice: A Handbook for Volunteers in Juvenile Court.* Together they worked to expand volunteer programs in the juvenile court by conducting another four regional conferences in 1971 and 1972 to raise citizen awareness. These meetings were funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and Sears, Roebuck Foundation. Response to the regional meetings clearly indicated the need to extend the volunteers-in-court programs into the states through the conduit of state PTA units. Funds were granted by LEAA—and matched by NCJCJ—to implement a 25-state volunteers-in-court program—

In the last two decades PTAs at the grassroots level have found innovative ways to protect youngsters from getting into trouble. This meeting of a city youth council includes PTA members and young people themselves as program planners of citywide youth activities.

again using the name Judicial Concern for Children in Trouble—during 1973–1974. The types of programs designed by the 25 states ranged from developing citizen advisory boards to training volunteers to work one-on-one with adjudicated or "pre-delinquent" children to forming a special classroom with a program to re-assimilate suspended students into their regular classrooms. Program participants also created a 16-minute audio-slide presentation with companion study guide. This training tool served to help any community, regardless of size or geographic location, develop a volunteers-in-the-court program.

Since the 1970s, as communities accepted PTA efforts to make the juvenile court system more responsive to the needs of troubled youngsters appearing before the court, the association has shifted its focus to prevention—identifying and minimizing the conditions that can lead juveniles, now termed *youths*, into trouble. Efforts to reduce absenteeism at school, instill self-discipline in children, educate them on the harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs, and preserve youth crime prevention programs still rank high among PTA activities.



In the late '60s PTAs and the communities which they served began focusing on prevention of delinquent behavior among juveniles. Police officers came into classrooms to talk with children as young as kindergarten age about drugs and alcohol and gangs.

1970–1979

For 203 million Americans, the fractious 1960s had created a desire for a return to more stable, more predictable times. But what they got in the 1970s was even more unrest and the Watergate political scandal, which resulted in, for the first time in our national history, the resignation of a U.S. president.

As the 1970s began, Richard M. Nixon was in the White House and the nation was still embroiled in Vietnam.

President Nixon promised to bring an end to the conflict, but the peace talks held in Paris were unproductive. Protests at home mounted as the unpopular and little-understood conflict continued—with 400,000 American troops still in Vietnam.

American education was also coming under scrutiny and receiving mounting criticism. A study commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation described the nation's public schools as "grim," "joyless," and "oppressive." Worse, the report judged, the public schools were in crisis, particularly in inner cities, failing to educate children adequately. The National PTA responded with initiatives designed to help improve instruction.

What did work during the 1970s were several government actions to improve the health and environment of the American people. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) became law, making the government the watchdog for maintaining safe and healthy workplace conditions—a stand the PTA had taken for children some 70 years before. Now it was law for every citizen.

The Poison Packaging Act made prescription drugs and other dangerous products difficult or impossible to open by children.

Urban
Education
The PTA
Challenges the Cities:
What Can We Do
for Our Schools?

In response to a Carnegie Corporation report that stated public education was failing to educate students adequately, the National PTA developed a project that addressed this problem in inner-city public schools.

The first Earth Day helped raise the nation's consciousness about the importance of protecting and preserving the environment. That year U.S. Congress passed the Clean Air Act, mandating reduction in automobile emissions. Personal health also improved as more adult Americans gave up smoking cigarettes. Teenagers, however, continued smoking at an alarming rate. Among all of these issues familiar and important to the National PTA, smoking by teenagers still predominated much of the association's attention.

The needs of society's children in the 1970s would reinforce the importance of the National PTA's actions to ensure their care, education, safety, health, and well-being.

The long-awaited merger

It was time.

At 8:00 p.m. on June 22, 1970, in the Grand Ballroom of the American Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers issued the following Declaration of Unification:

> The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers declares that its mission has been accomplished and that the time has come to unite with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers—the National PTA.
>
> The National PTA...declares its hope that the unification will produce an even stronger and more vital PTA movement throughout this country....The unified organization, continuing as the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, pledges that it will henceforth represent the ideals for which the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers have throughout their history labored so effectively.

Members of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and representatives from the National Congress of Parents and Teachers hold hands as a display of unity during the NCCPT Convention in Atlanta in 1970 when the two organizations formally united.

The 1970s

U.S. presidents: Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter

Headlines: Pentagon Papers published; Henry Aaron hits his 600th career home run; President Nixon calls for voluntary wage/price controls; Watergate scandal; U.S. VP Spiro Agnew resigns; U.S. troops leave Vietnam; Oil crisis; President Nixon resigns to avoid impeachment; Women admitted to U.S. military academies; Three-Mile Island nuclear near-meltdown; Camp David Accords lead to peace treaty between Egypt and Israel

Daily life: 55-mile speed limits; U.S. celebrates Bicentennial; Little League Baseball allows girls to play; U.S. population: 203 million; Average income: $12,370; Average public school teacher's income: $12,738; Average home: $55,500; Loaf of bread: 35.8¢; Gallon of gas: 65¢; Food processor: $39.99

Movies: A Clockwork Orange, The Exorcist, The Godfather, The Sting, Jaws, Rocky, Taxi Driver, Star Wars, Saturday Night Fever, Animal House, The Deer Hunter, Kramer vs. Kramer, Annie Hall, Apocalypse Now, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, The French Connection

Books: Love Story, Up the Organization, I'm OK You're OK, Bell Jar, The Winds of War, Shogun, All the President's Men, Watership Down, Passages, Scruples, Smiley's People, Humboldt's Gift, Roots

TV: Laugh-In, Mary Tyler Moore, The Odd Couple, Columbo, All in the Family, M*A*S*H, The Muppet Show; Saturday Night Live, Sonny and Cher, Charlie's Angels, Happy Days

Art & music: The Beatles break up; Elvis dies; electro-pop and disco music in vogue

On Broadway: A Chorus Line

Popular songs: Me and Bobby McGee, Bohemian Rhapsody, Layla, Night Fever, American Pie, You're So Vain, 9 to 5, We Are Family

What's new? Hamburger Helper, Post-it notes, no-smoking areas, water beds, Sony Walkman, mood rings

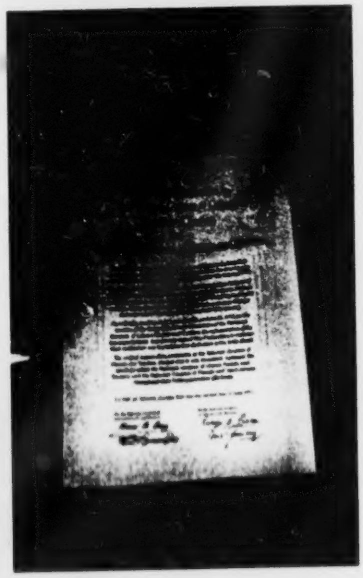
Clara Gay, outgoing president of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, observed the unification with these reflections:

National PTA President Pearl Price and NCCPT President Clara Gay sign the document that formally unites the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

> I have a dream that the National Congress of Parents and Teachers will be the greatest organization on Earth and that all children will be sheltered by its objectives. Unless we can look into the face of a little child and say, "I believe that child is capable of something better than what he is doing now," there is no hope for the child and in his ability to work out a safe democracy for the future. I believe the Parent-Teacher Association makes possible a cooperation of all patriotic people.
>
> I believe that such cooperation is coming. I believe that I can help make it come.
>
> This is my dream.

National PTA President Pearl Price, too, shared her vision for the unified organization:

> Now our finest hour has come. It is here. It is now....At long last we have overcome the barriers and surmounted the obstacles that kept us apart. We have overcome, and we have come together to become one. From the indissoluble union created at this hour will come a great infusion of strength and aspiration, a great renewal of purpose and dedication and commitment. This single National PTA established at this hour, here and now, will be a new entity imbued with newborn vigor and powered with fresh creativity....
>
> Our challenge now is to move above and beyond our separate, divisive experiences and build a shared experience, the experience of working together not as black persons and white persons but as human beings—human beings intent on building a society that cares deeply for all its children, whoever and wherever they are.



ATLANTA
AMERICAN
MOTOR HOTEL

Above: The signed Declaration of Unification

Left: Members of both organizations join NCCPT President Clara Gay (at the microphone) in a declaration of unity.

National PTA President Pearl Price (left) talks with other delegates at the 25th anniversary convocation of the United Nations.

STUDENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Commenting on a 1971 National PTA Board Action that called for youth representatives on the national board of managers, then PTA President Pearl B. Price said, "What makes this development so sound is that it fulfills a dual need: our need for the zest and idealism of youth; their need for our tempered insights and experience....I feel sure all of us have much to gain by involving young people in the deliberations and decisions of the National Board."

The National PTA Bylaws were revised at the 1971 convention to include students on the National PTA Board of Managers. This milestone in PTA history was precipitated by earlier National PTA decisions to involve youth in more meaningful ways at the grassroots and state levels. In 1952 the National PTA Board of Managers agreed to explore using the identifier PTSA—Parent-Teacher-Student Association—as a way to increase student participation at the high school level. Six years later the board formally authorized the use of PTSA as further incentive for student participation. In 1970, following nationwide student unrest, the PTA board adopted a motion that would remove all special categories or restrictions for full student involvement. "Students are to be considered full and equal members of their PTA or PTSA—there are to be no special dues, no special categories for student membership," states a 1971 National PTA publication, *PTSA: How to Put an S in Your PTA.*

The decision to include students as PTA members and on the board of directors was a meaningful way to involve students in PTA.

With youth members on the national board, more National PTA projects actively sought youth involvement. Both the 1977 Urban Education Project and the 1975 Comprehensive School/Community Health Education Project had youth components. The national youth forum of the Urban Education Project, which convened in Miami, Florida, in 1979, to discuss urban school

At long last, after so many years of the two associations working parallel, albeit separate paths, their common aim to assure the quality education, safety, and well-being of every child finally became one united mission.

In 1971, Elizabeth Mallory took over the helm as National PTA president and worked to streamline the organization. The 28 standing committees were reorganized into five commissions:

- Education
- Conservation of Human Resources
- Individual Development
- Leadership Training
- Membership, Organization Extension and Program Services

More significantly, each commission now included one young person between the ages of 15 and 20—to serve as a youth representative in its deliberations and discussions.

Elizabeth Mallory, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1971–1973

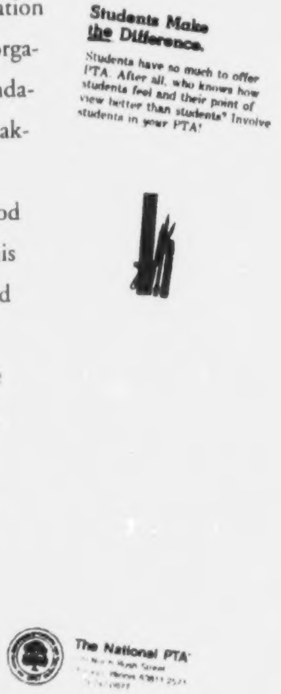
problems and their proposed solutions, became a prototype for the Student Health Education Forums (SHEF) held in four U.S. cities in 1980. SHEF leaders (all students) planned, organized, and ran the four meetings that produced a report outlining student recommendations on such health issues as alcohol use, nutrition, and sexuality to adults in policy making positions.

Another National PTA project that actively involved students was the 1979–1980 Food and Nutrition Project cosponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. This project saw students cooperating with parents to improve school food service programs and promote nutrition education activities.

More recent developments focusing on youth participation in the PTA include the publication of the *Students Make the Difference* kit in 1992, which provides PTAs with all the necessary information for increasing student involvement at the local level. Following the publication of the kit, the PTA established the Student Involvement Award, which premiered at the June 1993 convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. The award recognized PTAs or PTSAs that had effectively involved students at all levels of activity.

In addition, in 1995, members of the National PTA Youth Members' Conference produced a handbook for state PTA youth members entitled *What Every State Youth Member Should Know* to orient new members to the PTA. To keep members apprised of PTA activities and events, the Youth Members' Conference produced a quarterly newsletter, *Youth News and Views*, for state youth members and students attending state PTA conventions.

For almost half a century now, the PTA has affirmed the value of youths' voices in decisions affecting their education, health, and welfare. It is hoped that those voices will grow stronger with each passing year as the PTA moves into the next century.



Students Make the Difference.

Students have so much to offer PTA. After all, who knows how students feel and their point of view better than students? Involve students in your PTA!

The National PTA

This 1992 booklet was one of the many publications the National PTA designed to encourage students to join the PTA in their school, and to get involved in what PTA has to offer them.

P.T.A
Parent
Teacher
Association
U.S.

In 1972, the United States Postal Service acknowledged the 75th anniversary of National PTA by honoring it with a commemorative 8-cent stamp. The National PTA appreciated the publicity for this honor, which helped raise the public's awareness of the association's significant accomplishments and the work yet to be done.

The PTA used its good auspices to support the preservation of public education, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and continuing efforts to discourage smoking and alcohol use by the young.

In 1972, the use and abuse of alcohol by children was growing. As the PTA had done several years earlier in its antismoking project, it now turned its efforts towards the alcohol problem. In this 75th anniversary year, the National PTA received a grant to conduct an Alcohol Education Project from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)—a part of the National Institute of Mental Health established to advance research on, develop treatment for, and promote prevention of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. The association's objective for this innovative educational project was "to provide opportunities for parents and their children to learn about the responsible use or nonuse of alcoholic beverages and to heighten parents' awareness of the impact their drinking habits have on children about to form drinking habits of their own."

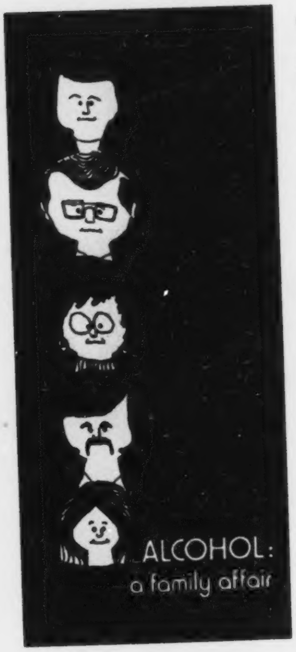
The project achieved success at the local PTA unit level. Public awareness of treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention programs available for families was heightened; curricular materials

THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Organized by an act of Congress, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) was established to assess, enhance, enrich, and expand public broadcasting. In order to carry out this charge, the corporation saw the need to set up an Advisory Committee of National Organizations (ACNO) to guide it actions. Upon the creation of the ACNO, Pearl Price, former National PTA president, received an appointment and served as its first chair. Thus began the National PTA's history of affiliation with the CPB.

Lillie Herndon was nominated to the CPB's board of directors during her presidency. She served 11 years in all, filling several positions during that time, including chair of the entire CPB for three years and chair of the Education and the Budget and Finance committees. It was during this period that Ambassador Walter Annenberg and his wife gave a grant totaling $150 million—$10 million a year for 15 years—to the corporation to produce programs in higher education. The Annenbergs' intent was that these programs would be designed to enable people who had never been able to attend or finish college to do so through courses offered on television.

According to Mrs. Herndon, "If you can imagine the thrill of making an acceptance speech for $150 million. Even today, I do not know how I opened my mouth…It's the largest grant that anyone seems to have a record of, anywhere, that was given to any broadcasting entity."



Left: The PTA cooperated with several governmental agencies in the '70s to educate the public on preventing alcohol abuse among children and youth.

dealing with the problem of alcohol abuse and its prevention were made available to teachers; and new levels of cooperation with other child-oriented community organizations—boys and girls Scout units, YMCAs, YWCAs, 4-H Clubs, and local sports organizations—were attained.

Mrs. Lillie E. Herndon, of Columbia, South Carolina, was president when the NIAAA extended its financial support to the Alcohol Education Project. During President Herndon's term—from 1973–1975—the National PTA conducted several key studies and projects among local units and communities to get to the core of the impediments to child and youth well-being.

Lillie E. Herndon, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1973–1975

A partnership with Sears, Roebuck and Company allowed the National PTA to investigate the rising incidences of student absenteeism. Through pilot projects conducted in five schools across the country, project team members were able to gather useful information into the causes and in many cases begin to reduce absenteeism through increased parent education and involvement.

Even as the National PTA fought long and hard for a federal comprehensive school health education bill, the association worked through state and local PTA leaders to raise community awareness of the need for coordinated curriculums and health services at schools. This project went forward with assistance from the Bureau of Health Education and the Office of Education within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Parents counted a victory with the passage of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Supported by the National PTA, the act gave parents the right to inspect their children's school records, and if necessary, correct or challenge them. The act also required the written consent of a student's parents before the release of information to unauthorized sources.

The National PTA was able to work in all these areas even as it experienced its first loss of its most critical resource—members.

ptatoday

School boards: an unknown quantity

Big night at Mokena: 'What can I be?'

The premier issue of *PTA Today*, which replaced *The PTA Magazine* in May 1975. The new magazine was printed as a tabloid newspaper, nine times a year.

In this typical '70s classroom, many students were beginning to live in divorced households. This produced more and more single parents who had to work to support their families, and who had less time to attend PTA meetings.

Membership decline

The once-thought-unstoppable rise in PTA membership plateaued and began to fall during the 1970s—a trend among most associations at this time, due in large degree to several societal factors: The number of school-age children had declined now that the post-World War II "baby boom" was over; uncertain economic times combined with double-digit inflation forced more and more mothers into the workplace; and a rising divorce rate produced more fragmented and fractured families, primarily headed by single mothers, who had to work to support their children.

The latter two influences produced more working mothers who were no longer available during the daytime to join with other mothers in PTA projects at their children's schools. Nor were they likely to come to school for evening events after a tiring day at work.

Besides the societal influences, unpopular positions taken by the National PTA at that time, such as on extremism or siding with the U.S. Supreme Court decision on school prayer—and in some cases not taken, such as on abortion—caused others to reconsider their membership. There was also a significant shift in what the members considered their role to be—no longer the parent educators so much as the fund-raisers, which created a question about the need to affiliate with a national association.

At the 1975 National PTA Convention, the National Foundation—March of Dimes presented this Picasso illustration of mother and child to the National PTA. The award was presented in recognition of the PTA's cooperation in sponsoring a series of parenting conferences in previous years.

In response, the association mounted a national information and membership recruitment campaign, with print ads in popular periodicals and public service announcements on radio, and even television. It was important to take the National PTA's message to the general public and make its mission known.

Despite fluctuations in membership, the National PTA's ability to effect positive results for the young remained constant. The association's attention fixed on television violence, school violence, handgun control, education opportunities for special-needs children, and adequate funding for schools and school meal programs as the presidential gavel passed from Mrs. Herndon to Carol K. Kimmel of Illinois.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

More media attention

Carol K. Kimmel, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1975–1977

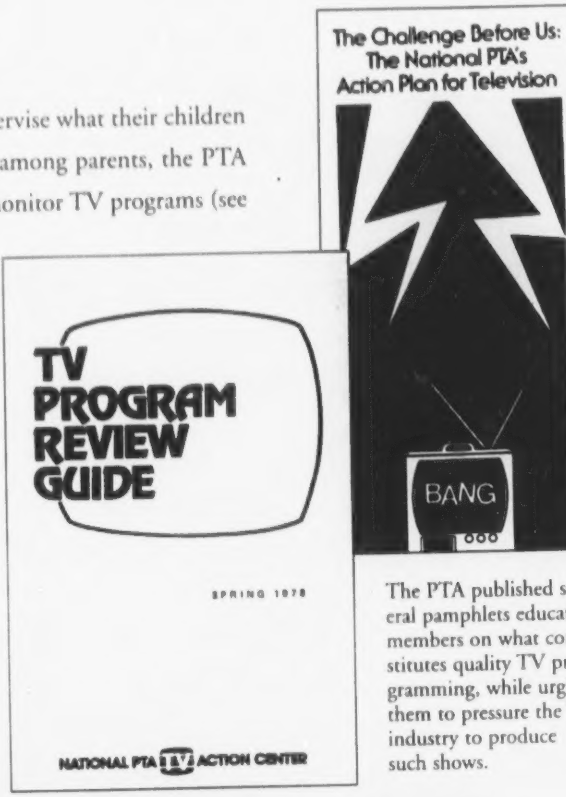
As the nation celebrated its bicentennial in 1976, the attention of the National PTA turned to the increasing tide of violence on television, the way this medium depicted women, and its effect upon children. Carol Kimmel, elected president in 1975, appointed a 10-member commission to investigate the issue and hold hearings across the nation. The results were startling—and eventually provided the basis for an ongoing project of the PTA to monitor the content of television programs. Among the commission's findings:

- Children learn and vent aggressive antisocial behavior after watching violent television.
- The play of children becomes less creative and more violent as they imitate television heroes.
- Television distorts the image of the police.
- Televised violence makes viewers less sensitive to real-life tragedy.
- Television presents racial and sexual stereotypes.

These findings pointed out the need for parents to more carefully supervise what their children watch on television. To help support this particular supervisory role among parents, the PTA launched the PTA TV Action Center and trained PTA members to monitor TV programs (see "Monitoring the Media and the Message," p. 96).

National policies for children and families

Although the term *family friendly* may not have been coined at the time, the National PTA was nonetheless involved in gathering the responses of parents in 6,000 local PTA units on potential federal policies that would directly affect their families. Parents' responses to what issues concerned them most were solicited for the Family Policy Project—funded by the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, and conducted through Cornell University's Seminar on Family Policy—to be used in developing a comprehensive set of national policies on child and family development.



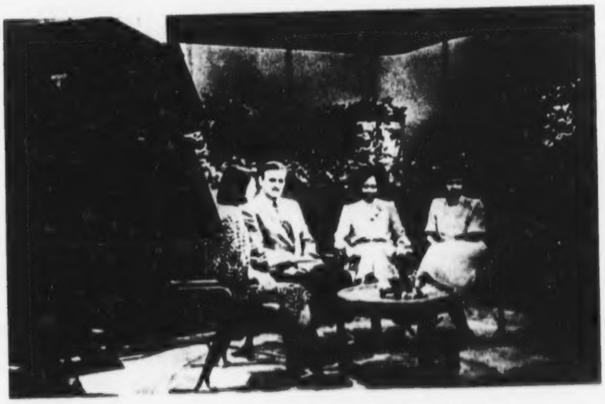
The Challenge Before Us:
The National PTA's
Action Plan for Television

TV
PROGRAM
REVIEW
GUIDE

SPRING 1978

NATIONAL PTA TV ACTION CENTER

The PTA published several pamphlets educating members on what constitutes quality TV programming, while urging them to pressure the TV industry to produce such shows.



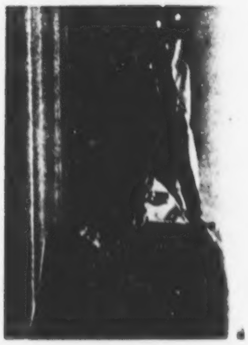
PTA members were trained to monitor TV shows for violent and sexual content.

National PTA putting TV on probation
PTAs rise up against TV viole
link TV to

In the '70s, the PTA initiated a nationwide program to combat TV violence.

Urban education

After decades of progress in child welfare, the membership of the National PTA became increasingly aware of the vast discrepancy in the quality of education that existed within states and among regions of the nation. The quality of life in the inner city of large urban areas spiraled downward as economic disparities within the country widened. This condition, in turn, affected the quality of education found there.



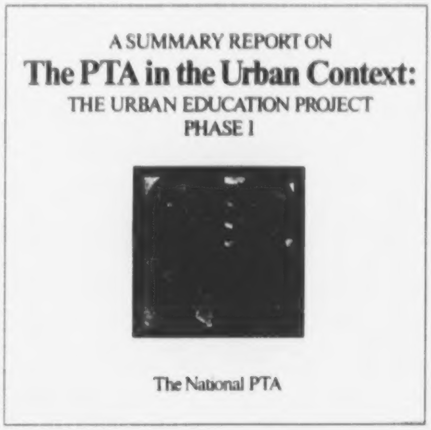
Grace C. Baisinger, president, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1977–1979

In November 1977, following Grace Baisinger's election as association president, the National PTA initiated the Urban Education Project, "to identify crucial problems confronting urban schools, examine ways in which various locales were responding to the problem, and develop new and dynamic strategies for solving urban problems, with parents being the leading force in the endeavor."

During 1978 and 1979, the National PTA consulted with local PTA units to develop a way to identify the most serious obstacles preventing adequate education of urban youth. Public hearings were held in Philadelphia, Seattle, Houston, Kansas City, Miami, and Detroit. Those hearings identified nine critical problems:

- Inadequate funding of public education
- Lack of parental participation in schools
- Poor student academic performance
- Inability of schools to meet the diverse needs of students
- General and youth unemployment
- Negative public perception of public education
- Financial overburden of urban school districts
- Violence in schools and communities
- The tie between classroom discipline and teacher preparation

In 1979, in President Baisinger's hometown of Washington, DC, the Urban Education Project culminated in a national conference.



A SUMMARY REPORT ON

The PTA in the Urban Context:

THE URBAN EDUCATION PROJECT

PHASE I

The National PTA

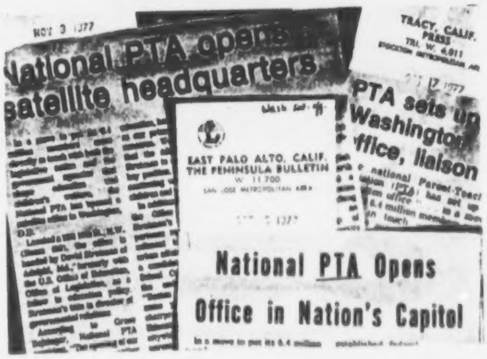
Above right: Begun in 1977, the National PTA Urban Education Project sought to identify the problems plaguing inner-city schools and propose solutions with parents and students as key players.

Right: Mrs. Baisinger, National PTA president, participates in an urban task force meeting. These meetings were held as a part of the Urban Education Project.

The event—entitled The PTA Challenges the Nation's Leaders: What Can We Do For Our Schools?—raised public and membership awareness of the deplorable conditions of urban schools.

As Mrs. Baisinger put it:

> Many American cities are experiencing progressive deterioration in living and employment conditions. This "urban blight" is also finding dramatic expression in the classroom, where forces outside of education are negatively affecting the lives of our young people, whose abilities and skills are never developed.



NOV 3 1977

National PTA opens satellite headquarters

EAST PALO ALTO, CALIF.
THE PENINSULA BULLETIN
W. 11,700

TRACY, CALIF.
PRESS
TRI. W. 4,011

PTA sets up Washington office, liaison

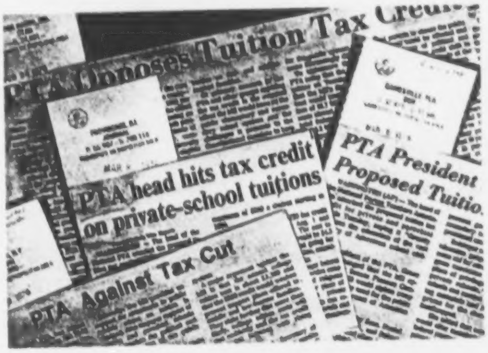
National PTA Opens Office in Nation's Capitol

The PTA opened its Office of Governmental Relations in Washington, DC, in the fall of 1977.

Her concern for the potential waste of a generation of young minds was a theme which could have been put forth by Alice Birney. The Urban Education Project was designed "to help reverse the deterioration of human lives in our cities, especially the wasting of a major portion of a generation of our youth."

The project proposed the following three models for the nation to cope with the pressures of inadequate urban education:

- The development of alternatives to the inequities of the property tax base to achieve more stable school finances
- The increased participation of parents in school, community, and family settings to assist them on overcoming feelings of powerlessness in the upbringing of their children
- The development of strategies to increase job opportunities for young people



PTA Opposes Tuition Tax Credits

PTA head hits tax credit on private-school tuitions

PTA President Proposed Tuitio

PTA Against Tax Cut

In 1978 the PTA's Washington, DC, office led a campaign opposing tax credits to families whose children attended nonpublic schools. The PTA opposed this measure on grounds that the proposed legislation would divert support from public education in this country.

The 1970s would end with a new round of international crises—the Russian invasion of Afghanistan resulting in the United States' decision to boycott the 1980 Olympics in Moscow on moral grounds, and concern for the fate of American hostages held by Iran. Increasingly Americans were becoming skeptical about their ability—and their government's—to change anything for the better.

In the 1980s, this concern would dramatically alter national priorities and cause PTA members both to welcome and worry about the consequences.

First Lady Rosalynn Carter receives an Honorary National Life Membership from National PTA President Carol Kimmel (second from left) and several members of the National PTA Executive Committee during a National PTA Legislative Conference in Washington, DC.

ADVOCATES IN ACTION

Advocacy means "to give voice," and the prime aim of the National PTA has always been to give voice to the concerns of those too young to speak for themselves—our children and youth. Until it came into being a century ago, no other organization existed solely to advocate for the best interests of children. Ever since then, through a partnership of adults educated about children's needs and willing to seek change, the National PTA has spoken out tirelessly, making sure its voice is heard where it can make the most difference—in the legislatures that shape our nation's laws.

CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND
P·T·A
The
VOICE
EVERY
CHILD
5
POINT
PROGRAM
NATIONAL & MINNESOTA
CONGRESS
PARENTS & TEACHERS

The PTA was founded on the principle of providing a voice for children as this window display promoting the PTA's work shows.

The first officers of what is now called the National PTA were forward-thinking women, many with political influence. One of the cofounders, Phoebe Hearst, was herself the widow of a former U.S. senator from California. These remarkable women guided the new organization in advocating to better the lives of children and youth. Their efforts drew enthusiastic support from many prominent national leaders. Theodore Roosevelt, for one—before, during, and after his presidency—chaired the PTA's Advisory Council, a committee focused on recruiting men into the PTA movement. He held that position until his death in 1919.

Immediate impact

The PTA's first decade saw the organization making a strong and immediate impact on legislation affecting food safety (the 1906 Food and Drug Act) and contributing much to the creation of our nation's juvenile justice protections.

Throughout its history, the PTA urged legislators at all levels to pass laws ensuring childhood safety.

It didn't take long for national leaders, such as Presidents Taft and Hoover, and later presidents beginning with Eisenhower, to recognize the expertise and dedication of this congress of parents and teachers and begin inviting representatives to attend important policy-shaping conferences and sit on federal committees. From the very first of the decennial White House Conferences on the Welfare of the Child, called by President Taft in 1910, the National PTA proved to be an influential participant. So, too, was the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers—being tapped for its knowledge and insights from its earliest days.

The National PTA has striven to establish a positive working relationship with each administration in the White House since Teddy Roosevelt. With similar intent, the various branches of the federal government have sought the knowledge, experience, and judgment of PTA members. The association's leaders and members have been invited to sit on federal commissions, participate in national conferences, and testify before congressional committees.

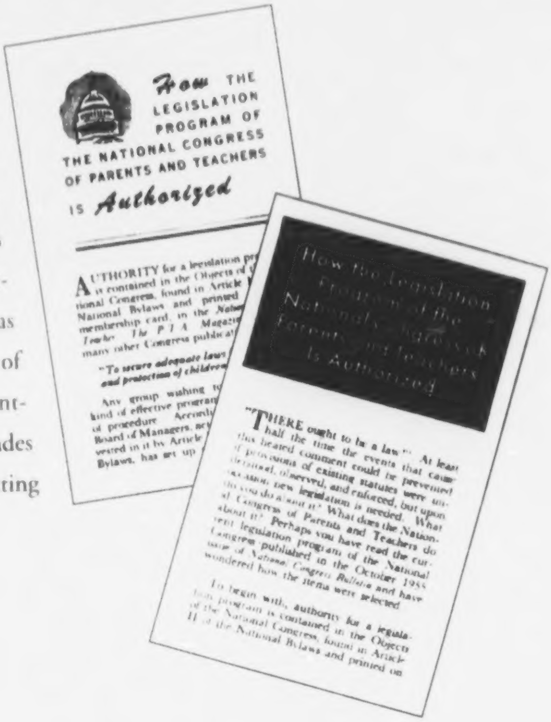
NATIONAL
SCHOOL
LUNCH
PROGRAM
VITAMIN C FOODS
PROTEIN-RICH FOODS

The National School Lunch Program came into being in 1946 with the passage of the National School Lunch Act. The PTA had long advocated for this legislation.

Whatever the PTA saw as requiring its attention—whether in the home, the school, or the civic arena—it drew on its active grassroots membership to influence legislation that would improve the lives of children. The pattern was established that continues to the present, of the PTA working on multiple fronts to advance its aims: creating instructive programs, providing useful information, and advocating for positive change from lawmakers.

Laws that make a difference

According to the 1949 PTA book, *Where Children Come First*, "With increasing vigor the members of the Congress [of Parents and Teachers], from the smallest local group to the national body, have learned that it pays to think about laws and to work for laws." PTA legislative activity, then as now, is proposed at the local level and, through a democratic process, adopted and implemented by state PTAs and the National PTA. That work has translated into countless legislative advancements benefiting the welfare of children and youth, enacted at least in part as a result of the efforts of countless PTA members working as advocates. The PTA worked for three decades to provide students with hot meals before its efforts led to legislation enacting


How THE LEGISLATION PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IS *Authorized*

How the Legislation Program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers Is Authorized

These leaflets provided guidelines for determining the legislative program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The PTA consistently has been a supporter of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

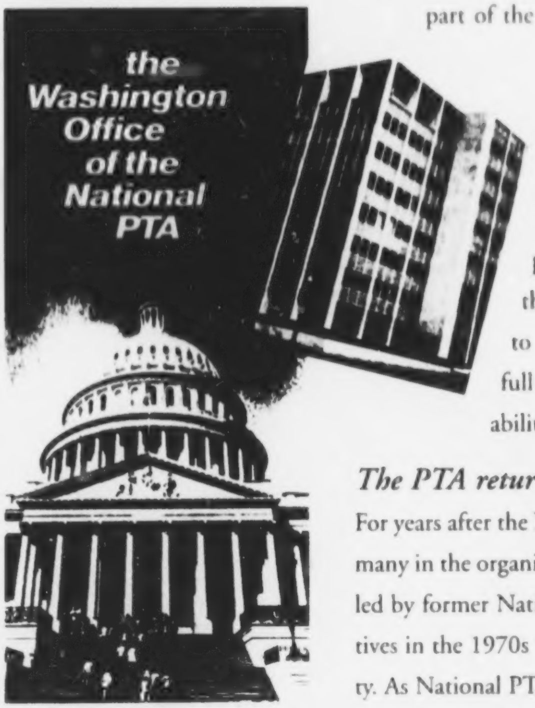
a federal school lunch program in 1946. Passage of the Federal Communications Commission Act of 1934 led to the kind of responsible oversight of the media that has always been advocated by the PTA. And even in the depths of the Great Depression, in 1933, the PTA was working to urge legislators "to support education costs as fully as possible," out of concern that the nation's financial crisis might lead to the compromising of our education system.

Throughout the years, the PTA has given voice to innumerable issues concerning the welfare of children:

- curbing juvenile delinquency
- fighting devastating diseases
- providing equal education opportunities for all children of this nation, including children attending Department of Defense schools abroad
- improving health education and services for children and families
- protecting the impressionable young from seductive promotions of tobacco and alcohol, glorified violence on television, and vulgarity and obscenity in records

The PTA has known when to stick with an issue, at times many decades ahead of the government in its understanding of the issue's importance—such as with the formation of the Department of Education in 1980. Although the PTA had advocated its creation since the early part of the 20th century, years became decades before the federal government recognized the need to turn the Office of Education within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare into a department of Cabinet-level importance.

Among the recent issues for which the PTA has fought are the passage of the V-chip provision of the Telecommunications Act; the inclusion of parent involvement—Goal No. 8—in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act; the passage of the Improving America's Schools Act, which targets assistance to children who are educationally and economically disadvantaged; as well as full support for family and medical leave, the education of children with disabilities, and adequate funding for programs benefiting children.



The PTA opened its Office of Governmental Relations in Washington, DC, in September 1977.

The PTA returns to Washington

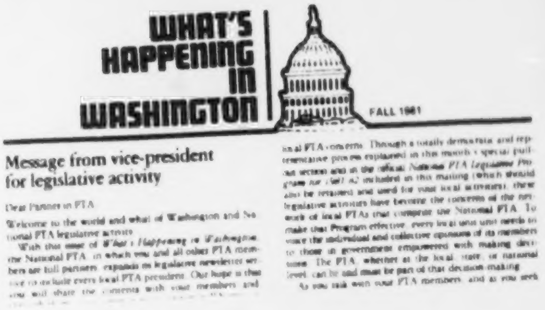
For years after the National PTA moved its headquarters from Washington to Chicago in 1939, many in the organization felt the PTA needed more of a presence in the capital. Through efforts led by former National PTA President Carol Kimmel, the PTA established three major initiatives in the 1970s that today are the cornerstones of its Washington-centered legislative activity. As National PTA coordinator of legislative activity, in 1971 Mrs. Kimmel initiated the first Legislative Conference, which is now an annual meeting in Washington, DC, where PTA leaders and legislative advocates meet together as well as with governmental representatives to discuss issues. That same year Mrs. Kimmel began writing an informal newsletter that she named *What's Happening in Washington.* This was made the "official" National PTA legislative publication in 1981, and today continues to carry in-depth and late-breaking news on the PTA's legislative activities. In 1977, Mrs. Kimmel created the PTA's Office of Governmental Relations (OGR) in Washington. The staff in that office, working with the National PTA vice president for legislation, helps shape federal legislation and communicates with volunteers in the field.

Legislative advocacy—at the national, state, and local levels—remains a central part of the PTA's effort to improve the lives of children. Many PTA members become part of its national Member to Member Network, PTA "members" working to educate their "members" of Congress on issues affecting children. Others work at the local level or become members of state legislative efforts. At every level, it is the efforts of grassroots PTA members that have made the PTA an effective advocacy organization for 100 years.

The National PTA
Legislative Conference

Left: As coordinator of legislative activity, Carol Kimmel organized the first legislative conference in 1971. Since then the legislative conference has become an annual PTA event.

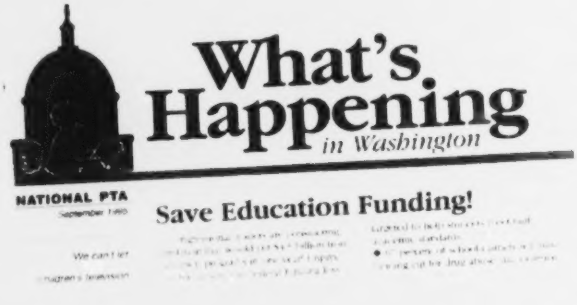
Below: PTA members have the opportunity to question guest speakers, many of whom are federal legislators, at the annual legislative conference.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WASHINGTON

FALL 1981

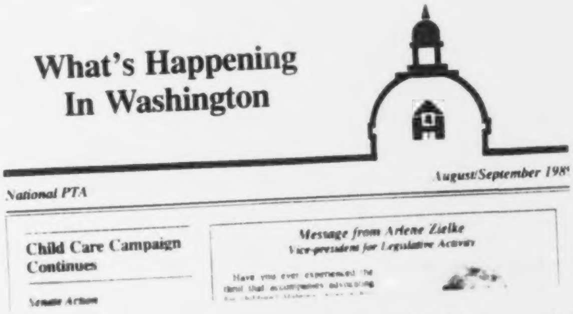
Message from vice-president for legislative activity



What's Happening in Washington

NATIONAL PTA

Save Education Funding!



What's Happening In Washington

August/September 198

National PTA

Child Care Campaign Continues

Senate Action

Message from Arlene Zielke
Vice-president for Legislative Activity

What's Happening in Washington, National PTA's legislative newsletter, informs members about impending and current federal legislation affecting children and their families, while providing the National PTA position on these issues.

1980–1989

When the American people entered the 1980s, they had been through more than a decade of grave disillusionment with their government. The seeds of conservative thought began to find rich ground for sprouting.

The expansion of the Vietnam War had been followed by the shock of Watergate and Nixon's resignation. While the Carter administration's Camp David Accords brought the first measure of progress to peace negotiations in the Middle East, the U.S. economy suffered from runaway inflation and record-breaking interest rates. In 1982, the prime rate peaked at 18.87 percent.

James J. Baron

In the '80s, as test scores continued to decline, Americans began to question the effectiveness of public education, and some blamed the schools for students' poor achievement.

Opposite page: A National PTA Reflections winner for the theme "Look Out Your Window." For more information on the Reflections program, see pages 143–145.

Changing government priorities

The American people had come to believe that they could no longer look to government for solutions to all social problems. Worse, more and more people seemed to feel a distrust of the government. Along with this general disaffection with the government, the public also began to question the effectiveness of public education. College entrance test scores for high school students continued their long decline. To the American people, this suggested failure on the part of schools—caused in large part by changing social values and family disintegration. A series of national reports also indicated that public schools were in decline.

Ronald Reagan swept into the U.S. presidency promising to shrink government, deregulate business, and lower taxes. He also sought to dismantle the newly formed Department of Education, which had been created when President Carter separated the former U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare into two independent offices in 1980: the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education.

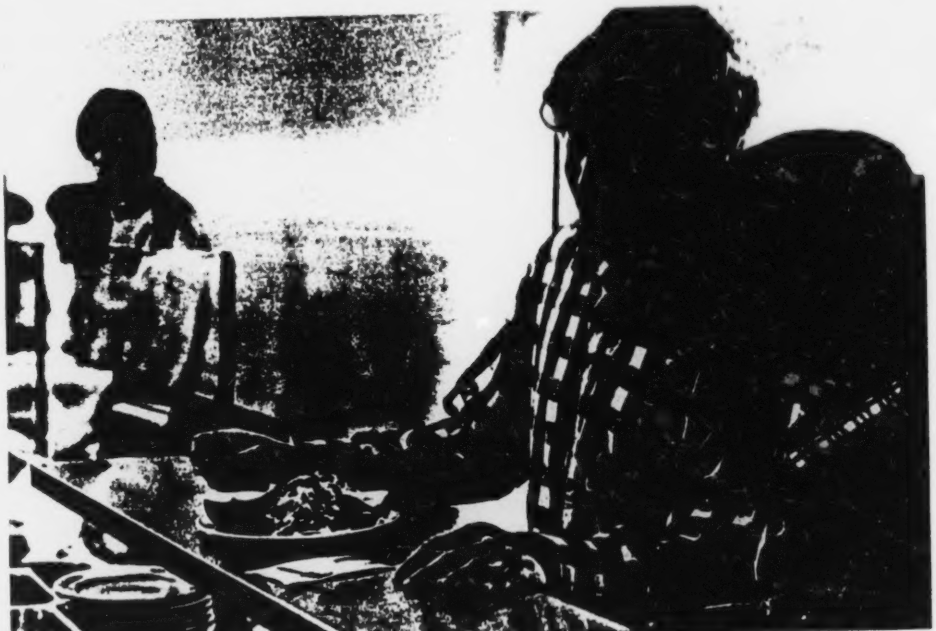
The National PTA feared that some of these Reagan administration policies threatened to undermine decades of hard-won reforms and safeguards for the education and well-being of the nation's young people. To the National PTA this could mean a huge step backward for programs it had long supported. However popular the new president, the PTA, nevertheless, stood firm as the first line of defense for parents and their children.

Virginia V. Sparling,
president, National
PTA, 1979–1981

Continuing the PTA tradition in the '80s

Virginia Sparling of Washington state had been elected National PTA president in 1979. She expanded the PTA child care initiatives—including the Urban Education Project—inaugurated in the '70s. In 1980, the National PTA sponsored five major showcase conferences to make the public aware of the Comprehensive School/Community Health Education Project and the Student Health Education Forums—four forums designed and conducted *by* students to exchange ideas and information *with* students on important health topics. Both initiatives were developed into training modules for use by state PTAs.

Good nutrition, essential to children's health, garnered the attention of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1980. The National PTA received USDA funds to conduct the Food and Nutrition Project in 20 states. The project aimed to improve nutrition education programs in local schools as well as the nutritional value of the breakfasts and lunches served there.



In 1980, the National PTA received USDA funds to conduct the Food and Nutrition Project in 20 states. The project aimed to improve nutrition education programs in local schools, as well as the nutritional value of the school meals served to students.

The 1980s

U.S. presidents: Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush

Headlines: Berlin Wall tumbles; Mt. St. Helens erupts; Coca-Cola's New Coke falls flat; Crack cocaine hits the streets; Space Shuttle Challenger explodes; Insider trading scandals shake Wall St.; Iran holds Americans hostage in U.S. embassy in Teheran; Iran-Contra Affair; U.S. invades Panama; Stock market drops 508 points in one day; Savings and loan crisis

Daily life: Growing cultural diversity; Halley's Comet returns; U.S. population: 227 million; Average income: $22,872; Average public school teacher's income: $26,700; Average home: $101,000; Loaf of bread: 54¢; First-class stamp: 20¢; Gallon of gas: $1.71

Movies: Raging Bull, On Golden Pond, The Color Purple, Gandhi, Amadeus, Wall Street, Rain Man, Ordinary People, Terms of Endearment, Sophie's Choice, Driving Miss Daisy, Tootsie, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Chariots of Fire, Platoon, ET

Books: Harlequin romances, Gorky Park, Hotel New Hampshire, Name of the Rose, Lake Wobegone Days, Texas, Red Storm Rising, Misery, Presumed Innocent, Patriot Games, Bonfire of the Vanities

TV: Cable TV booms, 60 Minutes, Love Boat, Miami Vice, Taxi, Hill Street Blues, LA Law, Lonesome Dove, Family Ties, Roseanne, The Cosby Show, Cheers, Newhart, David Letterman, Nickelodeon, Dallas, Oprah

Art & music: Heavy metal rock and rap music; rock benefits such as We Are the World support social causes; MTV booms; John Lennon murdered; Simon and Garfunkel reunion concert

On Broadway: Cats, Les Miserables, Phantom of the Opera

Popular songs: Physical, Bette Davis Eyes, Endless Love, Every Breath You Take, Jump, Flashdance, Tainted Love, Material Girl, Ebony and Ivory, Thriller, Born in the U.S.A

What's new? IBM PCs, minivans, NutraSweet, Cabbage Patch dolls, cellular telephones, Trivial Pursuit, video games, music CDs

Although each state's approach to the Food and Nutrition Project differed, they all "succeeded in establishing constructive relationships among parents, students, school officials, school food service personnel, and organizations interested in the welfare of children," according to the project's final report, which appeared in the November 1980 *PTA Today*. A companion article summarized each state's initiative for the benefit of other states interested in developing a school nutrition project.

The '80s saw the PTA focus its attention on a range of problems affecting children's health and social environment—AIDS, physical and mental abuse, alcohol and other substance abuse, gangs, unemployment, and violent crime.

The PTA's solid foundation of parent education and teacher partnership was still the most effective weapon in the war being fought for the lives and the minds of young people.

The Food and Nutrition Project brought many healthy breakfasts and lunches to schoolchildren across the country.

One indication of the PTA's direction was the call to action of new National PTA President Mary Ann Leveridge of Texas. At the 1981 convention, she declared her administration's theme, "Parents and Teachers Working Together—Still the Best Aid to Education." This underscored the continuing need for the unflagging support of the PTA—at the local and national levels—for public education, and the value of parent-teacher partnerships in determining what is best for the children.

Mary Ann Leveridge, president, National PTA, 1981–1983

Watching the government

For almost 80 years, PTA volunteers—through their national chairmen and vice presidents of legislation—provided government-related information to PTA members and testimony to legislators. In 1977 the National PTA had taken this effort to a higher level with the creation of its Office of Governmental Relations (OGR), located in Washington, DC, and served by a professional staff to assist the vice president for legislation. The OGR became an important voice on legislative issues affecting children.

When the Reagan administration sought massive cuts in federal school lunch and child nutrition programs, and severe cutbacks in other programs aiding education and children, the National PTA made its voice heard. PTA child advocates went on record opposing all legislation that disproportionately affected children. By educating its constituency and marshaling its resources, the PTA spoke as the voice of school parents nationwide, and was successful in preventing some of the more crippling proposals from being enacted.

Mary Ann Leveridge, National PTA president, with First Lady Nancy Reagan, who addressed the National PTA's 1982 Legislative Conference to introduce her "Just Say No" initiative.

But even as the PTA opposed these policies of the new administration, the organization managed to forge an effective working relationship with the Reagan White House. In 1982, First Lady Nancy Reagan addressed

Right: The "Just Say No" project was initiated shortly before the PTA joined with six other national organizations to form the National Coalition to Prevent Drug and Alchohol Abuse.

Below: An exhibit at the 1981 National PTA Convention in Orlando, Florida, where delegates could gather information about drug abuse.

Just say no
We Say No...!

It starts. It's called drug abuse prevention.
School Portraits

the National PTA's annual legislative conference. There she introduced her "Just Say No" initiative and acknowledged the PTA's long-time efforts to combat drug abuse among children.

Shortly thereafter, the PTA joined with six other national organizations to form the National Coalition to Prevent Drug and Alcohol Abuse. The coalition started off with a call to communities to watch and learn from the PBS-produced documentary on substance abuse titled *The Chemical People*. As follow-up, the coalition provided local communities with direction and assistance for the next several years.

For the PTA's part, President Leveridge announced the organization would "activate its own nationwide network of parents, teachers, and students to tackle the problem…at the local level." President Reagan showed his own support for PTA efforts by proclaiming October 1982 as National PTA Membership Month. In 1983, he also addressed the annual PTA convention at which Elaine Stienkemeyer of Michigan took over as the association's president. The delegates voted in favor of resolutions to improve and expand computer technology in schools and to initiate finger-

Elaine Stienkemeyer, president, National PTA, 1983–1985

President Reagan showed his support for PTA efforts by proclaiming October 1982 as National PTA Membership Month, and by addressing the 1983 annual PTA convention.

printing of children for safety reasons. The association also called for the removal of children from adult jails and lockups.

In late summer of 1983, the National PTA launched its own association-wide Drug and Alcohol Project, an effort which began in Mary Ann Leveridge's term. The project gave 32 PTA councils $500 grants to help them conduct local drug and alcohol awareness projects, beginning with organized community viewings of *The Chemical People*. The nationwide initiative included a media campaign of radio and television public service announcements.

In 1984, National PTA President Elaine Stienkemeyer bestowed the first Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Educator of the Year Award on Leonard Diggs.

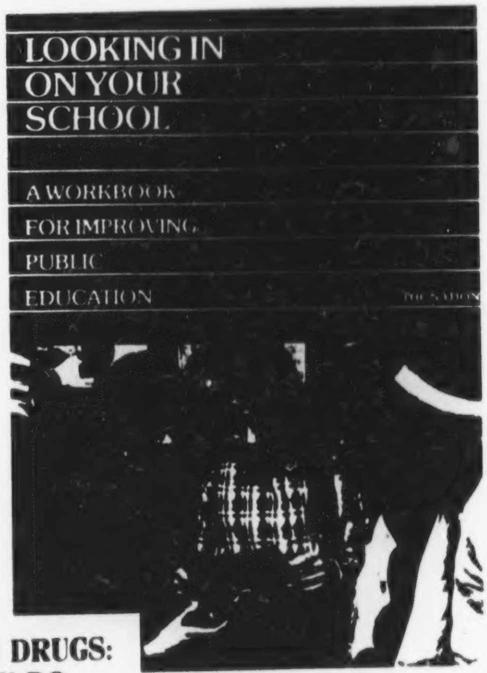
By the opening of the 1984 national convention, 20 years of decline in PTA membership had been reversed, with its rolls rebounding to 5.4 million members. That same year the legacy of founder Phoebe Hearst—herself a teacher as a young woman—was highlighted with the inauguration of the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Educator of the Year Award. Funded by a grant from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, the Outstanding Educator award was established "to honor one teacher, administrator, counselor, or other individual each year whose primary concern is the education of children and youth."

The award, still bestowed each year, consists of a cash stipend for the recipient, an additional honorarium to underwrite a local educational project in the recipient's community, and an all-expense-paid trip to the national convention at which the award is presented. The first recipient was Leonard Diggs, a music teacher from O'Connell Junior High School in Lakewood, Ohio.

In another show of support for those dedicated to education excellence, the PTA, in 1984, established Teacher Appreciation Week. This annual May observance encourages parents, students, and communities to make a year-long practice of supporting teachers through collaboration, cooperation, and expressions of appreciation.

To extend its efforts to prevent drug use, the PTA published *Young Children and Drugs: What Parents Can Do*, in cooperation with Wisconsin Clearinghouse, and awarded Drug and Alcohol Project grants for another 36 PTA councils to implement local programs.

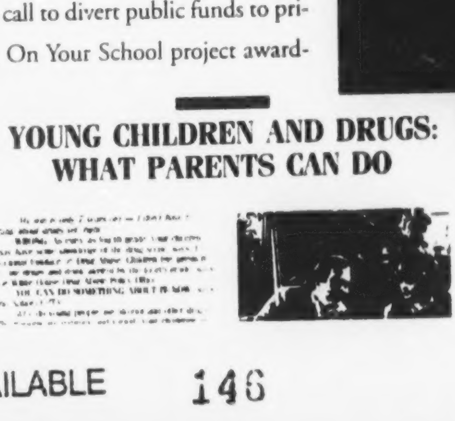
In 1983, the Department of Education report *A Nation at Risk* had startled the whole country with its grim depiction of American public schools as "drowning in a rising tide of mediocrity." This created public concern and passionate debates over school curriculum, teaching, school organization, leadership, and fiscal support. It also caused a renewed call to divert public funds to private schools. In response, the PTA's Looking In On Your School project award-



LOOKING IN
ON YOUR
SCHOOL

A WORKBOOK
FOR IMPROVING
PUBLIC
EDUCATION

The Looking In On Your School project was developed by PTA in response to *A Nation at Risk*, the Department of Education's grim depiction of public schools in America.



YOUNG CHILDREN AND DRUGS:
WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

To extend its efforts to prevent substance abuse, the PTA published a number of publications parents could use to help cope with the drug problem among youth and teens.

Ann Kahn (then-National PTA first vice president,) shows off a colorful Reflections display.

ed two grants aimed at promoting teamwork among parents, principals, teachers, and students, to improve their communities' public schools. This also revived the PTA's opposition to private school vouchers and tuition tax credits.

Nurturing arts education

Research shows that participation in the arts stimulates thinking processes and improves problem-solving abilities.

Over the years, federal cuts to education programs and local opposition to school tax referendums have threatened many school art and music programs. This has been a particular concern for the PTA, for the association has long been a firm supporter of arts education.

In 1984 the PTA increased the visibility of its Reflections arts program (see "The Reflections Program," page 143) by creating a traveling exhibit that displayed the work of Reflections award recipients. In 1984, a new scholarship program was added.

ACHIEVEMENT
IN THE ARTS
NATIONAL PTA
REFLECTIONS

An ounce of prevention

Mid-decade prevention efforts aimed at curbing drug and alcohol use took form in the March 1985 inauguration of Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week and Project SMART.

Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week was launched with the sponsorship of Chevron, U.S.A. The corporation funded a planning kit—complete with posters, logos, and program ideas—

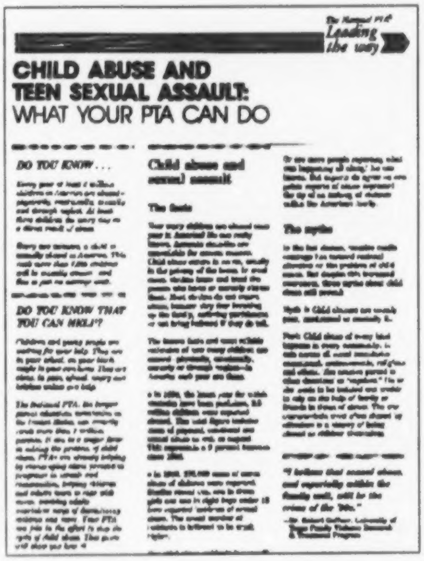
THE
NATIONAL
PTA

First Lady Nancy Reagan attended the 1984 National PTA Convention to share her concerns about substance abuse and to express her appreciation for PTA efforts in this area. Joining her was Bruce Weitz, star of the TV show *Hill Street Blues* and honorary chairman of the National PTA Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Project and supplied public affairs assistance to support the programs and activities of local PTAs. The National PTA promoted this observance for more than 10 years.

Project SMART (Stop Marketing Alcohol on Radio and Television) carried its message through a petition drive, conducted by PTA and several dozen other organizations, to collect 1 million signatures and present them to the U.S. Congress. At the time of their presentation, the National PTA asked Congress to pass the Fairness in Alcohol Advertising Act of 1985. The act would require television licensees and cable operators who aired alcoholic beverage commercials to give equal time for public service announcements that showed the perils of alcohol use and misuse. According to then-National PTA First Vice President Ann Kahn, such a law would make it possible to "counteract the portrayal in the ads that alcohol and a drinking lifestyle are synonymous with popularity, success, and happiness."

Ann P. Kahn, president, National PTA, 1985–1987

Following the 1985 convention, at which Ann Kahn became the new National PTA president, she headed a membership that was increasingly aware of the problem of child sexual abuse. In response to a resolution adopted at the 1984 convention, PTA leadership, with the assistance of the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, distributed the *Child Abuse and Teen Sexual Assault: What Your PTA Can Do* planning guide to all local PTA units.


Leading the way

CHILD ABUSE AND TEEN SEXUAL ASSAULT:
WHAT YOUR PTA CAN DO

DO YOU KNOW . . .

Child abuse and sexual assault

The facts

The myths

DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN HELP?

In response to a resolution adopted at the 1984 convention, PTA distributed the *Child Abuse and Teen Sexual Assault: What Your PTA Can Do* planning guide to all local PTA units.

In early 1985, district presidents representing 23 major U.S. cities had been surveyed to help the PTA assess whether areas of large member bases had the resources they needed to do the best possible job. Survey responses led the PTA to develop the Big City PTA Project, with the mission to increase parent involvement in urban school districts by strengthening their PTA councils. In December 1985, two such PTA councils in Milwaukee and San Diego were awarded $4000 grants, plus technical support, to carry out pilot projects of their own design. Over a year's time, each city secured significant media coverage of its leadership training conferences, generating interest among schools wanting either to become PTA schools or to reactivate their lapsed membership. In 1988, Miami and San Francisco also received grants to fund their projects. The four pilot projects became models for other big city PTA councils on how to garner greater parent commitment to children's schools.

Lyrics and literacy

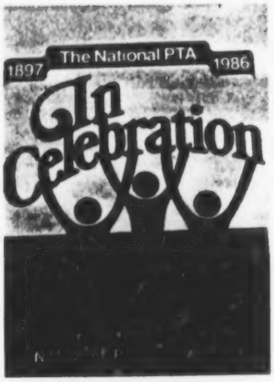
Parents were the victors at the end of 1985—after a year-long wait—when the Recording Industry Association of America agreed to the National PTA's request for labels with "explicit lyrics—parental alert" on recordings of such nature.

The membership also became increasingly aware of the silent problem of adult illiteracy. In 1986, President Kahn and the Executive Committee announced their support and encouragement of all local PTAs to participate in PLUS: Project Literacy U.S., launched jointly by the American Broadcasting Company and Public Broadcasting Service. Communities were invited to establish tutorial programs and task forces to deal with illiteracy locally. Radio and television programs, including documentaries produced by ABC and PBS as well as public service announcements, educated the public about adult illiteracy in America. Local PTAs were given extensive materials for use in this initiative.

Preserving public education

In the wake of the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, the federal government proposed numerous ideas aimed at providing children with access to better education. Many of these ideas—such as tuition tax credits for attending private schools—would have been detrimental to public education. Concerned that the federal government's willingness to divert public tax money to private institutions would erode rather than improve public education, the PTA issued this challenge through President Kahn:

> The time has come for parents, the community and the government—local, state and federal—to support public schools, and their teachers, aggressively. It is our job in this generation to assure the doors to opportunity through education remain wide open for all children.



The cover of the 1986 National PTA Convention program

In the fall of 1986, the PTA launched a year-long celebration of public education and asked local PTAs to take action to keep public schools strong. It developed a planning kit, *In Celebration: PTA Salutes Public Schools—School Is What We Make It!*, to help PTAs support the initiative.

During her administration, Ann Kahn earned high visibility in the media, which created renewed vigor among the membership and helped to swell the PTA's ranks.

National PTA President Ann Kahn stands on Michigan Avenue in Chicago beneath street banners celebrating the 90th anniversary of the National PTA.

The theme chosen for the 1986 convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, was "In Celebration." This also tied in to the celebration of the PTA's 90th convention. The PTA also developed a planning kit, *In Celebration: PTA Salutes Public Schools—School Is What We Make It.* Bill Clinton, then governor of Arkansas, spoke at the convention.

National PTA Position Statement—Support of Public Education:

(adopted 1983, revised 1991)

> …The National PTA believes that public education provides a common experience for building and maintaining a commitment to the basic values of a democratic system of government. A strong public education system is vital to America's well-being.…

SELF-ESTEEM

The *Leading Children to Self-Esteem* guide for parents was a companion piece to the award-winning *Mirrors* video produced by National PTA and Keebler Company.

Self-esteem central to 90th celebration

When the National PTA announced the theme of 1987—its 90th anniversary year—as "Believe in Yourself! Building Children's Self-Esteem," hundreds of local PTA units adopted self-esteem as the focus for their year's programming. Wider interest in this important component of children's well-being gave rise to the National PTA-Keebler Company film *Mirrors: A Film About Self-Esteem. Mirrors* received three awards for excellence, from the U.S. Film and Video Festival, the Council on International Nontheatrical Events, and the Public Relations Society of America.

Manya S. Ungar, president, National PTA, 1987–1989

HIV/AIDS—the new epidemic

In 1987, the National PTA made HIV/AIDS awareness a central endeavor. National PTA President Manya Ungar, elected earlier that year, called upon local PTA leaders to get HIV/AIDS education into the nation's schools. In her words:

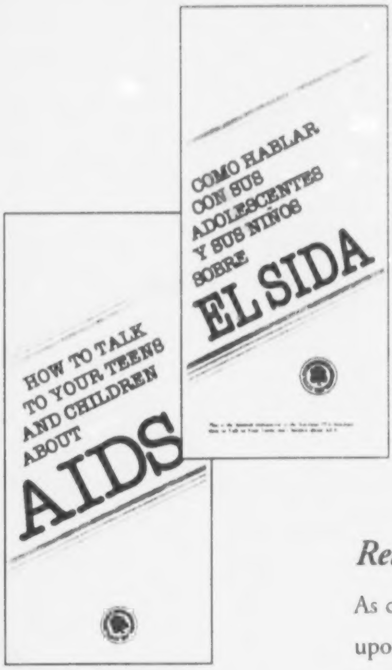
> Perhaps never before in the recent history of our association have you been needed so much.
>
> The National PTA, indeed the children of America need you. Prepare and encourage your local units to respond to the need as we did in years gone by when polio panicked the nation.
>
> We know from that history that together, PTAs, armed with information and dedication, can make the positive difference.

To that end a massive public education and information campaign was undertaken. In cooperation with U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett

U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop worked with National PTA to distribute to all PTA constituents educational information about HIV/AIDS. He is pictured with President Manya Ungar at the 1988 National PTA Convention.

Koop, the National PTA distributed to all constituents educational information that explained the nature of the disease, how it is spread, and safeguards to be taken in keeping the outbreak under control. The PTA also went on record in support of the adoption of local school board policies to permit the enrollment of children with AIDS-related illnesses in regular day-school settings, rather than needlessly isolating them.

A partnership was formed between the National PTA and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in which the CDC provided funds for continued expansion of the AIDS Education Project and dissemination of information to local PTA units. The work continues today with a CDC-funded grant administered through the American School Health Association, to provide continuing education, training, and materials on HIV/AIDS to PTAs.


HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEENS AND CHILDREN ABOUT AIDS

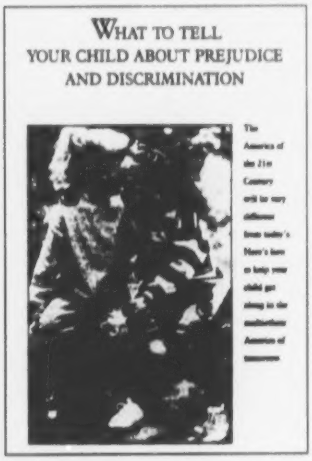
COMO HABLAR CON SUS ADOLESCENTES Y SUS NIÑOS SOBRE EL SIDA

National PTA always supported distributing as much information on HIV/AIDS as possible. It also began translating many of its more popular brochures into Spanish to reach a wider audience.

Reaching out

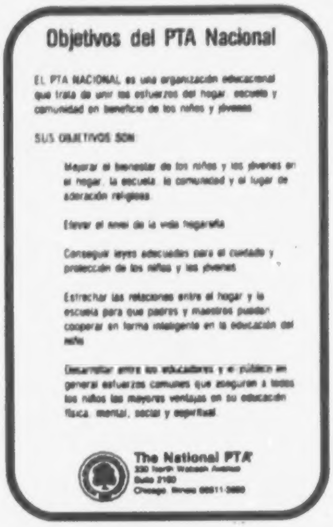
As caring adults were learning how to nurture good feelings in their children, the PTA called upon its members to reach out to people of diverse backgrounds within the community. To help in that effort, many of the PTA's more popular publications, which covered subjects ranging from drug education to parent-teacher meetings to latch-key kids, were being translated into Spanish. Articles for parents and information about PTA were also placed in Spanish-language newspapers around the country. The PTA also produced the brochure *What to Tell Your Child About Prejudice and Discrimination* to help parents teach children the critical importance of respecting people of all types, races, creeds, and colors. The brochure was produced in conjunction with the Anti-Defamation League and received impressive media attention.

The PTA's dedication to educating children about substance abuse led to a $1 million grant from GTE Corporation in 1989 to create a prevention program aimed at 9- to 14-year-olds—the


WHAT TO TELL YOUR CHILD ABOUT PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Above: The PTA published this brochure in its continuing effort to help parents teach children the critical importance of respecting people of all types, races, creeds, and colors.

Right: The PTA realized the importance of reaching the Spanish-speaking community, and translated its more popular brochures into Spanish.


Objetivos del PTA Nacional

EL PTA NACIONAL es una organización educacional que trata de unir los esfuerzos del hogar, escuela y comunidad en beneficio de los niños y jóvenes.

SUS OBJETIVOS SON:

Mejorar el bienestar de los niños y los jóvenes en el hogar, la escuela, la comunidad y el lugar de adoración religiosa.

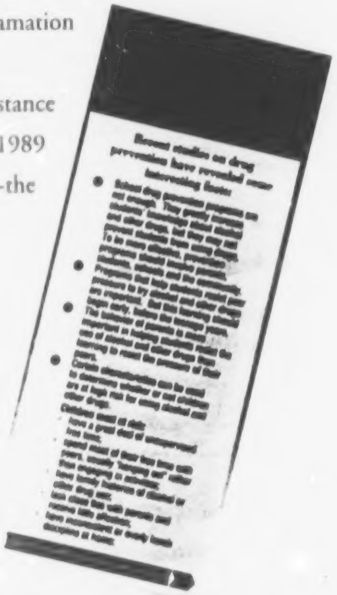
Elevar el nivel de la vida hogareña.

Conseguir leyes adecuadas para el cuidado y protección de los niños y los jóvenes.

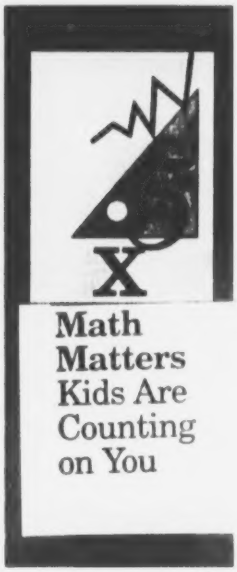
Estrechar las relaciones entre el hogar y la escuela para que padres y maestros puedan cooperar en forma inteligente en la educación del niño.

Desarrollar entre los educadores y el público en general esfuerzos comunes que aseguren a todos los niños las mayores ventajas en su educación física, mental, social y espiritual.

The National PTA


Recent studies on drug prevention have revealed some interesting facts:

The kit *Common Sense: Strategies for Raising Alcohol & Drug Free Children* was created with a grant from GTE Corporation. This brochure was part of a larger award-winning program.

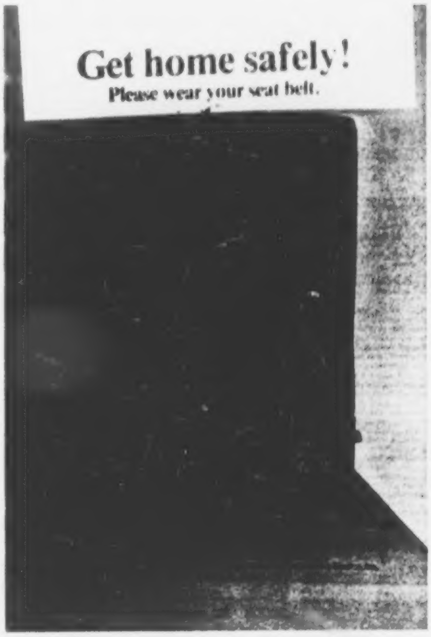

X
Math Matters Kids Are Counting on You

A Nation at Risk and other subsequent national reports deplored the deficiencies of American schools, especially in math and science at a time when developments in technology demanded stronger skills in these areas. The PTA responded with *Math Matters: Kids Are Counting on You*, a teaching aid for parents.

period, experts believed, during which children start experimenting with drugs and alcohol. This venture was the largest one-issue project undertaken by the PTA in its 92-year history. The partners created the program kit *Common Sense: Strategies for Raising Alcohol & Drug Free Children* to equip parents with the information needed to talk with their children about alcohol and drugs. To reach the greatest possible number of parents, the kit—with its award-winning video, program planning guide, and brochures for parents—was made available to PTAs for free in October 1990.

Addressing the matters of math

A Nation at Risk and other subsequent national reports deplored the deficiencies of American schools, especially in math and science at a time when developments in technology demanded stronger skills in these areas. The PTA responded with *Math Matters: Kids Are Counting on You*, a teaching aid for parents created in cooperation with the Mathematical Sciences Education Board and funded by the Exxon Educational Fund and Carnegie Foundation. *Math Matters* included a videotape, a pocket calculator, a poster, and a reproducible brochure of entertaining educational activities. This kit was distributed free to all elementary, middle, and junior high school PTAs, and received high praise from parents, educators, and the business community.

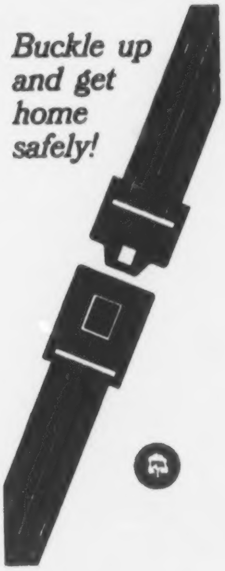

Get home safely!
Please wear your seat belt.

As a part of the "Get Home Safely" campaign, E.T. appeared on this poster that advocated the use of seat belts.

Seat belt safety

As early as the 1970s, the National PTA had spoken out in support of the wider use of seat belts in automobiles. By the late 1980s, using front seat belts was an automatic habit of major portions of the population, children included.

This simple act of buckling up was advanced in part by the National PTA's "Get Home Safely" Safety Belt-Child Restraint Project. During the three-year run of the project, which began in the fall of 1982, the PTA teamed with numerous sponsors, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Toyota Motors, and General

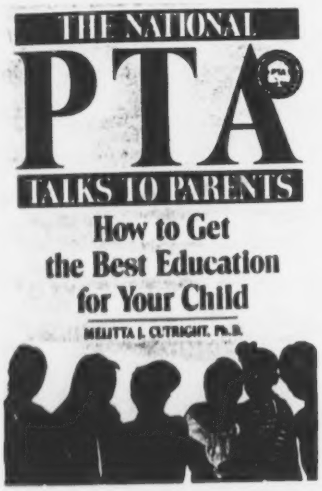

Buckle up and get home safely!

Motors, to promote not only the use of safety belts but also putting "young children in federally approved car seats every time [they] ride in the automobile."

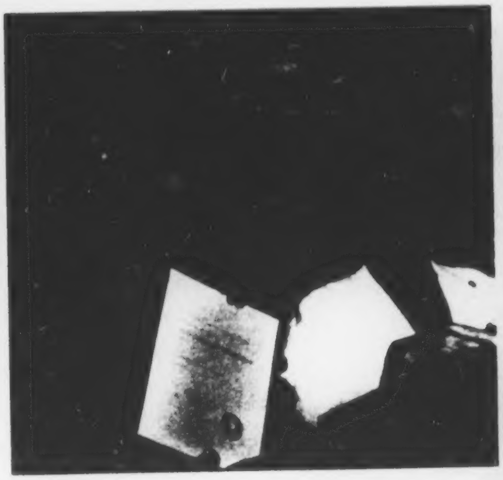
The project was supported with grants for PTA councils to conduct public education campaigns, as well as program guides, audiovisual kits, posters, and convention workshops. A nationally aired public service announcement and a high-powered campaign aimed at pediatricians, parents, and the public by the American Academy of Pediatrics helped spread the message. The use of child safety seats increased from 15 percent in 1979 to 68 percent in 1984. Adult safety-belt usage also improved during this time. However, rear seat belts and shoulder harnesses were still not commonly used. This was a serious safety omission. So in 1989, the PTA passed a resolution at the national convention that urged local units to do the following:

> …encourage federal and state legislators to enact laws requiring the installation of shoulder/lap seat belts for all passengers in new passenger/multipurpose passenger vehicles…

That same year the PTA published its first book, *The National PTA Talks to Parents: How to Get the Best Education for Your Child*, which provided effective, valuable advice on the most important issues facing parents. The PTA was now rapidly approaching its centennial anniversary, but still found it needed to focus on many of the same issues that concerned Alice Birney and Phoebe Hearst in the 1890s. As the National PTA entered the 1990s, it was issuing the same call for parent and teacher involvement as it had in the 1890s.


THE NATIONAL
PTA
TALKS TO PARENTS
How to Get
the Best Education
for Your Child
MELITTA J. CUTRIGHT, Ph.D.

The PTA's first book provided effective, valuable advice on the most important issues facing parents.



Continuing to earn support from top leaders, the National PTA hosts Vice President Dan Quayle at its 1989 Legislative Conference (above), and in 1983, presents Barbara Bush with an Honorary Life Membership, the PTA's highest honor (right).

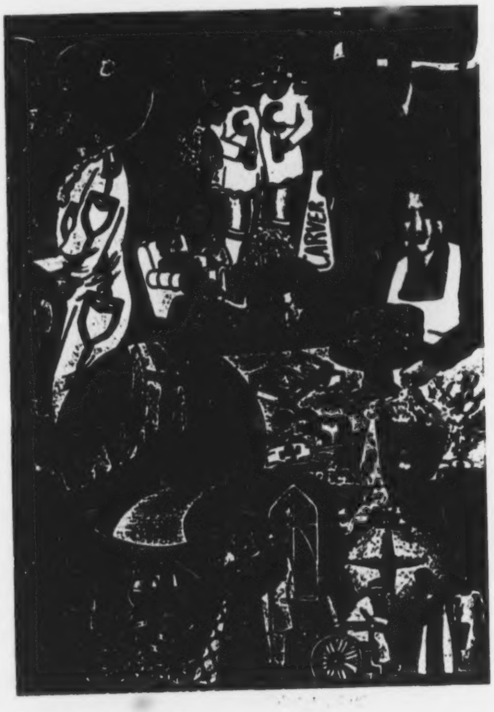
THE REFLECTIONS PROGRAM

It was a project that its founder described as "almost too simple." And yet, that very simplicity has been the cornerstone of the Reflections arts education program, and possibly the reason for its enduring success.

Reflecting on the program's origins, its founder, the late Mary Lou Anderson, wrote that the idea for Reflections came out of a casual telephone conversation she had in 1968 with her cousin John Allen of *Reader's Digest* magazine. Allen suggested that the PTA and *Reader's Digest* do a cooperative project focusing on children and the arts. In the fall of that same year, Allen and Anderson, who was a member of the National PTA Board of Directors, met with then-National PTA President Elizabeth Hendryson and Eva Grant, editor of *The PTA Magazine*, to plan such a program.

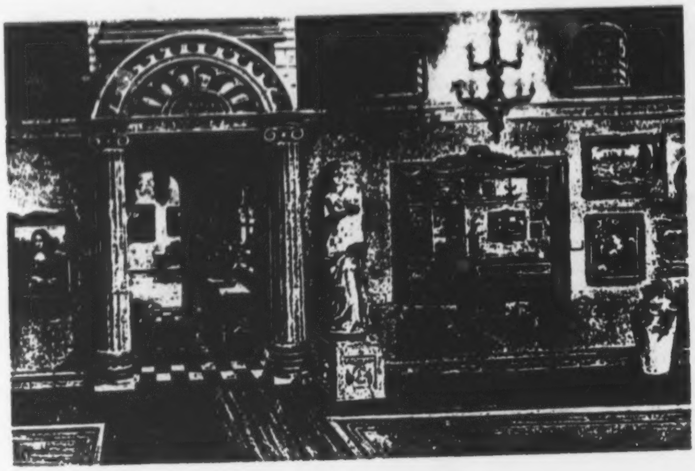
In light of the PTA object advocating that educators and the public work together to provide children and youth with the best possible education, involving all parts of the personality—mental, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual—this group devised a program whereby children and youth from across the country would submit original creative work.

Coincidentally, earlier that year delegates to the 1968 National PTA Convention had passed a resolution promoting the value of the cultural arts. The groundwork was laid, and the first Reflections competition, based on the theme "Reflections: Children and Youth Mirror Their World," premiered in

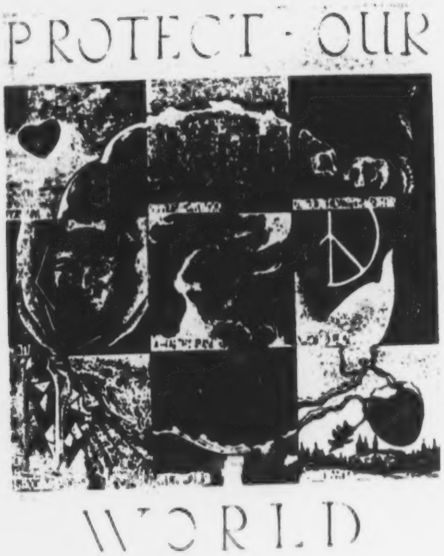


Love Is..., 1977–78

Following are a sampling of the hundreds of works recognized in national Reflections programs held throughout the years. Below each image is the Reflections theme and year. Since the mid 1970s, Reflections themes have been chosen from ideas submitted by students.



I Have A Dream, 1983–84



If I Could Give the World a Gift, 1993–94

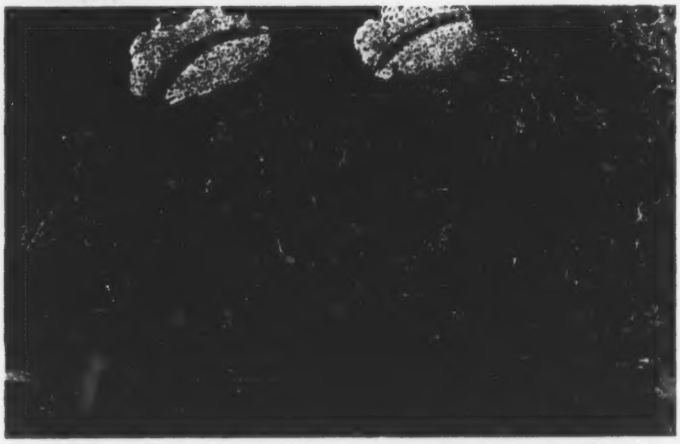
1969. Two hundred and fifty-four literature, music, and visual arts entries from 31 states poured into the national office. Winning entries were displayed at the 1970 National PTA Convention in New Orleans.

Life in These United States, 1982–83

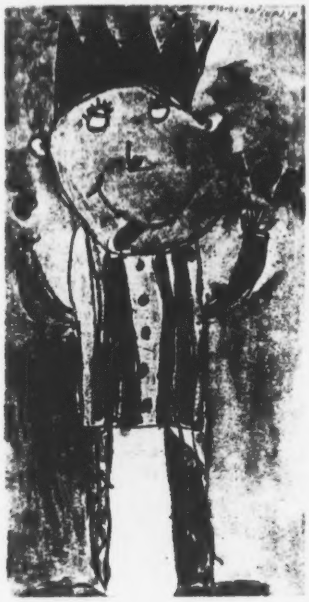
The success of the program was documented in a report to the delegates at the 1971 National PTA Convention in Oklahoma City. That report indicated that at least three students won summer art scholarships as a result of the recognition they received at the 1970 national convention. One young man, who had been awarded an honorable mention for his music composition, was invited to conduct his school orchestra as it played his piece at a citywide concert. The report concluded with the words of one state PTA cultural arts chairman: "It is amazing how much pride children gain from this program. Some winners never have had any success in school until this."

Over the years the program has grown tremendously, while remaining faithful to the original vision of Mary Lou Anderson to provide an outlet for the creative expression of children from kindergarten through grade 12. In 1995, the end of the program's 25th anniversary year, more than 700,000 young people from the 53 PTA congresses submitted original work based on the theme "Dare to Discover." That year the primary grade category was also extended downward to include preschool children.

In 1986, Reflections expanded its vision when photography was added as a fourth arts division, joining the visual arts, music composition, and literature. Other



What Sparks My Imagination, 1984–85



It Could Happen, 1996–97

Life in These United States, 1982–83

developments over the years included the establishment of the Reflections Scholarship Program in 1984, with a generous gift from Anderson.

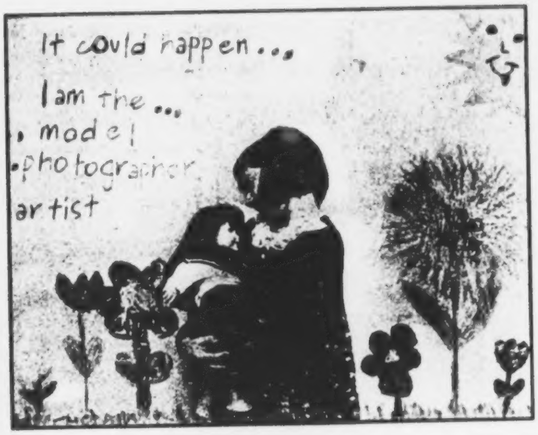
The Reflections Traveling Exhibit also began in 1984 when the PTA signed a cooperative agreement with Allied Van Lines. Allied was sponsoring a special traveling exhibit relating the story of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island to raise funds for the statue's restoration in preparation for its 100th birthday. Because of its related theme, "Life in These United States," the 1982–83 Reflections exhibit was integrated into the Allied exhibit. In the wake of that exhibit, the PTA began sponsoring its own traveling exhibit to cities across the United States.

Reflections remains strong and continues to grow in its second quarter-century. Of course the program would not continue to prosper without the support of its corporate sponsors, whose efforts have meant so much to the program's success. But most important of all has been the participation of millions of young people, whose creative work has inspired us, enriched us, and provided hope for our future.

What Makes Me Smile, 1981–82

Wonders of the World, 1987–1988

Imagine That, 1991–92



It Could Happen, 1996–97

PTA
100 YEARS

1990–1997

The futurists were only half right. For decades they had predicted that the wonders of computers would revolutionize our lives. While computers certainly have had that impact, the technology gurus missed calling the other revolution. The revolution in communications technology—the interjection of computers into the realm of communications—created teleconferencing, distance learning, the Internet, and the World Wide Web. All this meant incredible new educational opportunities to libraries and classrooms. It also brought new concerns over the risks of children having total open access to any information—good and bad.

But if the technology was changing fast, the world's political landscape was changing even faster. In 1956 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev promised the capitalist countries that "we will bury you." Ironically, it was Soviet ideology that got buried. Communism fell before a Western onslaught—not of tanks and missiles but of photocopiers and Big Macs. While the communist regimes spent themselves into bankruptcy trying to maintain and extend the Iron Curtain, their people succumbed to the Western lure of democracy and blue jeans.

Thus, the members of the National PTA entered the last decade of the 20th century facing global and technological changes that would forever alter the way they would communicate, work, and live.

The 1990s also brought about social improvements at home with the passing of the Clean Air Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act—two areas related to PTA efforts to secure a healthier environment for children and guarantee equal education opportunities for students with special needs. Smoking was banned in many public buildings and on domestic airlines. In

The 1990s

U.S. presidents: George Bush, Bill Clinton

Headlines: Soviet Union disintegrates as the two Germanies are reunited; Gulf War; Blacks win equal rights in South Africa; LA riots after Rodney King verdict; Terrorist bomb rocks NY World Trade Center; Flames end Waco cult siege; Israel, PLO take tentative steps toward peace; Homegrown terrorist bombs Oklahoma City federal building, killing 168

Daily life: Corporate downsizing sparks trend toward self-employment; Computers everywhere; Cocooning; Average income: $32,264; Average public school teacher's income: $35,757; Average home: $118,000; Loaf of bread: 76¢; A gallon of gas: $1.25; Refrigerator: $1,100; A video game: $63.94

Movies: Silence of the Lambs, Philadelphia, Forrest Gump, Goodfellas, City Slickers, The Fugitive, My Cousin Vinny, Schindler's List, A River Runs Through It, Beauty and the Beast, Braveheart, Unforgiven, The Lion King, Apollo 13, Aladdin, Jurassic Park, Dead Man Walking, Space Jam, Toy Story, Fargo, Star Wars trilogy rereleased

Books: Oh the Places You'll Go, The Bourne Ultimatum, The Stand, Burden of Proof, The Kitchen God's Wife, The Sum of All Fears, Rising Sun, The Pelican Brief, Dead Man's Walk, Infinite Jest, Life's Little Instruction Book, Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus, Waiting to Exhale

TV: Picket Fences, Twin Peaks, Northern Exposure, Seinfeld, Star Trek: The Next Generation, In Living Color, Mad About You, Friends, ER, "reality" TV and more talk shows; Johnny Carson retires

Art & music: It's not all rock 'n' roll: Luciano Pavorotti tops the album charts

On Broadway: The Grapes of Wrath, Miss Saigon, Lost in Yonkers, Rent, Angels in America, Sunset Boulevard

Popular songs: Nothing Compares 2 U, Healing Hands, Friends in Low Places, Everything I Do, Tears in Heaven, Achy Breaky Heart, I Will Always Love You

What's new? The Internet, cappuccino cafes, digital cameras, satellite TV

fact, fewer people were smoking nationwide—except for teenagers, where an alarming upward trend continued

The National PTA had rebuilt its membership to 7 million by the early 1990s. With this resurgence, the association found itself poised on the threshold of its second century. It would be a time for its members to help celebrate the accomplishments and milestones of the first 100 years, and more important, to rededicate itself to the purpose and promise of meeting the needs of all children.

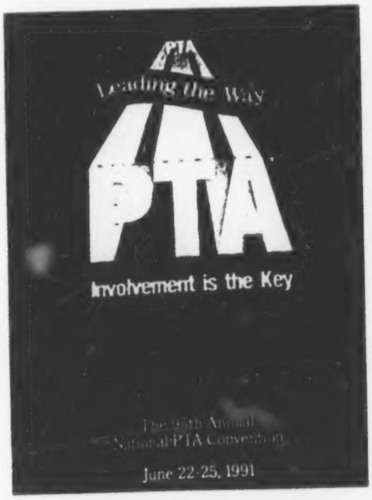
Planning for the future

Ann Lynch, president, National PTA, 1989–1991

Ann Lynch, elected in 1989, selected "Leading the Way" for the PTA theme during her term of office—an appropriate motto for an association dedicated to finding solutions and pointing others to them. Now she and her administration were preparing a path for the association to take by establishing a long-range plan. New emphasis was placed on developing leaders at the local level and preparing them for roles at state and national levels.

The idea of *parent involvement* began to draw attention among not only parents, but educators, business people, and policy makers. Study after study revealed that one sure way to dramatically improve our children's learning was for parents to give more attention to what was being done in schools. The National PTA applauded the development of National Education Goals adopted by President George Bush and the National Association of Governors, but counseled that goals for parent involvement were missing. There would be opportunity for PTA's advice to be repeated with the appointment of Mrs. Lynch by President Bush to the President's Education Policy Advisory Committee, the first appointed committee created by the Bush administration.

The National PTA earned the recognition of federal legislators when the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed a resolution, followed up with the signature of President Bush, designating February 17–23, 1991, as National PTA Week. The resolution worked to focus local, state, and national attention on the effective work, past and present, by the members of the PTA, and to highlight the need for even more parent involvement. According to President Bush, "What goes on in the classroom is only part of a child's educational experience; parents still have the primary responsibility for what and how their children learn." Around this federally designated week, the National PTA built a month-long campaign with



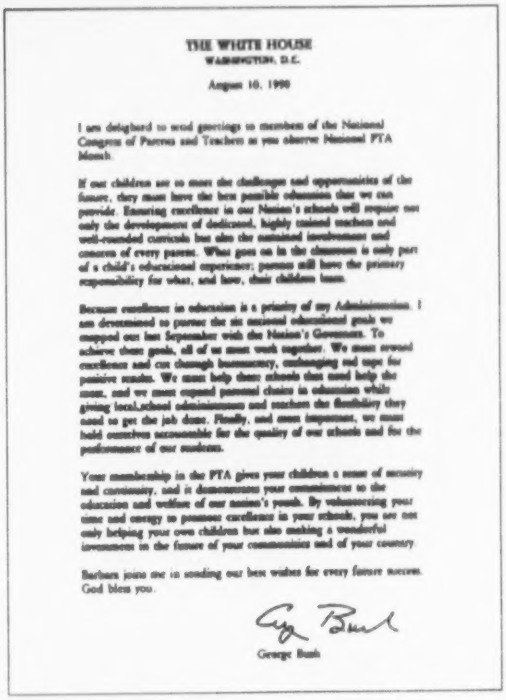
The cover of the 1991 convention program, displaying the "Leading the Way" theme adopted by PTA President Ann Lynch.

In the fall of 1989, PTA President Ann Lynch was asked to serve on the President's Education Policy Advisory Committee, the first appointed committee of the Bush administration. In 1991, President Bush declared February 17–23 National PTA Week. Around this federally designated week, the National PTA built a month-long campaign with the theme "Parents Who Care Have Children Who Care."

the theme "Parents Who Care Have Children Who Care." The February campaign was designed to increase parental participation in the nation's schools and to create awareness of the PTA as a vital element of each child's education, health, and safety. National association officers developed a leader's guide for council and state PTAs to use during the month to spread the word about how PTAs at all levels positively affect American education and the welfare of all children.

Newsweek magazine and the Chrysler Corporation cooperated with the National PTA in conducting a national survey, in January of 1990, to determine the level of parent involvement in American education. The following figures were results of a national sample of parents with children in grades K–12:

- 57 percent said parents are the most influential figure in their child's learning.
- 69 percent said they discuss school topics with their children; 36 percent helped with homework.
- 34 percent are "very familiar" with the curriculum in their children's schools; 11 percent were "extremely familiar."
- 58 percent said their children's school strongly encouraged them to get involved.
- 72 percent cited lack of time to get involved in parent groups; 66 percent cited work schedules.
- 42 percent used vacation time from work to attend important school conferences or activities.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 10, 1990

I am delighted to send greetings to members of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers as you observe National PTA Month.

If our children are to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future, they must have the best possible education that we can provide. Ensuring excellence in our Nation's schools will require not only the development of dedicated, highly trained teachers and well-rounded curricula but also the sustained involvement and concern of every parent. What goes on in the classroom is only part of a child's educational experience; parents still have the primary responsibility for what, and how, their children learn.

Because excellence in education is a priority of my Administration, I am determined to pursue the six national educational goals we mapped out last September with the Nation's Governors. To achieve these goals, all of us must work together. We must reward excellence and cut through bureaucracy, exchanging red tape for positive results. We must help those schools that need help the most, and we must expand parental choice in education while giving local school administrators and teachers the flexibility they need to get the job done. Finally, and most important, we must hold ourselves accountable for the quality of our schools and for the performance of our students.

Your membership in the PTA gives your children a sense of security and continuity, and it demonstrates your commitment to the education and welfare of our nation's youth. By volunteering your time and energy to promote excellence in your schools, you are not only helping your own children but also making a wonderful investment in the future of your communities and of your country.

Barbara joins me in sending our best wishes for every future success. God bless you.

George Bush

Newsweek and the National PTA have continued to cooperate on national surveys during the 1990s, making it possible for the PTA to collect helpful information about the practices and attitudes of parents toward their children's education, and then use that information to design materials for its members.

Promoting HIV/AIDS education

The National PTA remained an important conduit for educating parents and children about HIV and AIDS. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention renewed its grant to enable the National PTA to continue to produce materials for parents' use in talking with their children about the virus. Articles on HIV/AIDS education and parents' roles in bringing the information to the schools were authored by Ann Lynch and appeared in the National Association of Secondary School Administrators' newsletter *NewsLeader* as well as the *Journal of Health Education.*

Safety issues

The Steer Clear of Alcohol and Other Drugs project put a new spin on National PTA's substance abuse prevention efforts. This PTA initiative was supported by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and worked to reduce teen drinking and teen alcohol-impaired driving through an awards program and a video competition.

The Steer Clear video competition invited students in grades 10–12 to produce 10-minute videos to show why they thought teenagers should not drink or drink and drive. Entries were accepted as music videos, docudramas, documentaries, or public service announcements. Cash prizes were awarded to the student producers, their schools, and their PTAs.

PTAs were also encouraged to apply for the Project Graduation Award, which entailed hosting an all-night, chemical-free party during some major school celebration. Winning PTAs received cash awards.

This image was used in the National PTA and Navistar's *Be Cool. Follow the Rules.* program. The award-winning program provided materials to local PTA units to educate students, parents, teachers, and school bus drivers on better ways to assure children's safety on and around school buses.

Concern for children's safety on the way to and from school linked the National PTA with Navistar International Transport to produce a series of TV public service announcements (PSAs) on school bus safety. These original PSAs along with new ones have continued to air on network and independent stations since the beginning of the decade. To support the media promotion, Navistar also provided funds for print materials to be distributed to local PTA units. Called *Be Cool. Follow the Rules.*, this award-winning program provides materials to educate students, parents, teachers, and school bus drivers on better ways to assure children's safety on and around these vehicles.

Smooth segue

Pat Henry became National PTA president in 1991. To insure that the focus of the National PTA would be clear into the next century, Mrs. Henry worked closely with Immediate Past President Ann Lynch to complete the development of a long-range plan for the association—a plan that would provide continuity and a defined mission for years to come.

Pat Henry, president,
National PTA, 1991–1993

Proclaiming the importance of parent involvement

Pat Henry's administration also worked to strengthen the parent involvement movement begun during the previous term. In efforts to persuade busy parents that it was possible to participate in their children's education, the National PTA worked with JCPenney to produce and distribute more than 750,000 copies of the pamphlet *The Busy Parent's Guide to Involvement in Education.*

During her first year in office, Pat Henry announced the National PTA's plan to host a parent involvement summit of education and child-centered organizations. The summit was held in April 1992, with 28 organizations convening to discuss what each could do to help turn this philosophy into practice among its constituents. These groups developed a mission statement which each organization took back to its members to help steer their separate organizational efforts (see below).

Busy
Parent's
Guide to

PARENT INVOLVEMENT SUMMIT MISSION STATEMENT

Our vision for the education of America's children and youth includes parent/family involvement. This involvement is essential for the positive emotional and social development, cultural growth, and academic achievement of every child. As the nation focuses on educational excellence, parent/family involvement must be aggressively pursued and supported by homes, schools, communities, businesses, organizations, and government entities by working together in a mutually collaborative effort. Therefore, it is the intention of the participants of the National Parent Involvement Summit to advance and ensure the highest levels of parent/family involvement through our respective organizations.

To achieve this mission, we will…

- Obtain or renew a strong commitment to parent/family involvement through our respective organizational goals, policies, and activities
- Generate visibility for the mission and facilitate implementation among Summit group participants' constituencies and the general public
- Strengthen efforts to assure that parent/family involvement meets the needs of families of diverse backgrounds
- Seek legislation and the development of policies that include parent/family involvement
- Continue communication and collaboration among Summit participant groups and other key groups as identified

On October 29, 1992, at the North Carolina PTA convention, the night before his last game, Magic Johnson spoke to the attendees about HIV/AIDS and his recent diagnosis.

A follow-up conference and survey revealed that more than half of the organizations attending the first meeting were carrying the mission forward. At this second gathering, the attendees drafted a letter to President Bill Clinton, asking him to make parent involvement a priority. The letter got right to the point:

> While parent involvement alone cannot remedy the problems with education, none of the other solutions is likely to attain maximum success without the active participation of parents and family.

These PTA activities helped strengthen the case for including a parent involvement amendment among the National Education Goals.

Extending the welcome of the national congress

In 1991, the National PTA celebrated the incorporation of its 53rd and newest congress—the Pacific Congress of American Parents, Teachers, and Students Inc. The congress encompasses U.S. Department of Defense schools in Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. As the National PTA began efforts to strengthen its outreach to diverse populations, the Pacific Congress brought a new dimension of cultural awareness.

Inclusiveness first became a familiar term in the PTA vocabulary in 1987, during Manya Ungar's administration, when the association looked around and realized how many varied populations had not been reached with the PTA story. Now it became a regular feature of all PTA programs. The association began developing materials to help sensitize members and provide them with the tools to broaden the reach of the PTA message, and extend a welcome to others in their communities. The initial program was called *In Someone Else's Shoes*. The video and leader's guide were designed to be used together to start discussions within PTA units about how to include more groups from the community in the association's plans and activities.

WELCOME
PACIFIC
CONGRESS

Committee
n Family
Newsweek
Newsweek
Newsweek
1990

During the Ann Lynch administration, *Newsweek* magazine began producing inserts reporting on surveys it conducted jointly with the National PTA. Standing by the display of "Education in America: Putting Children First" are *Newsweek* General Manager Harold Shain, National PTA Vice President Kathryn Whitfill, and National PTA President Pat Henry.

Initiatives to improve health and safety

A number of long-standing National PTA concerns for children's health and safety were addressed in the early 1990s.

To draw media attention to children's health issues, the association worked with its long-time associate, the American Academy of Pediatrics, to hold the Children First Conference for Media.

National PTA Earth Week was launched in April of 1991 to encourage PTA units, schools, and families to conduct Earth-healthy activities during the entire week surrounding the national Earth Day observance.

From proper seat belt use to sober teen driving to school bus safety, the National PTA had been working for many years to improve children's well-being around vehicles. Now, in association with Cycle Products and *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, the National PTA could offer the bicycle safety program Way to Ride!, which gained nationwide participation.

The Family and Medical Leave Act, a cause the National PTA had supported during the bill's long, rocky journey through the U.S. Congress, finally became law in 1993. The act brought assurance to employees that their job would be safe should they need to attend to urgent family and medical matters that would take them away from their work for extended periods.

Arnold Schwartzenegger, card-carrying member of his local PTA and the keynote speaker at the 1992 National PTA Convention, spoke to the attendees about the importance of parent involvement. He is pictured here receiving an Honorary Life Membership.

Parent involvement becomes a national goal

From the outset of her presidency, which began at the 1993 annual national convention, Kathryn Whitfill stressed the need to empower parents with the knowledge that they can make a difference in their children's education. Two surveys conducted by World Book Educational Products—the first one in conjunction with the National Association of Elementary School Principals—revealed that parents were in unanimous agreement with principals when asked to identify what parents can do to help their children succeed in school. Both groups identified the following:

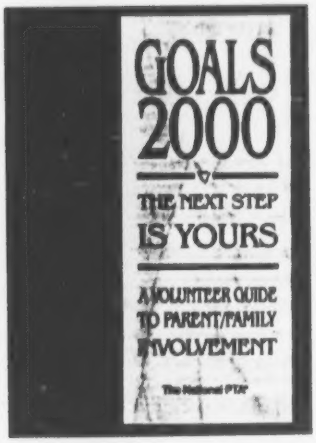
- listening to and talking with a child—paying consistent attention to the child's questions and feelings
- showing pride in a child's academic growth and accomplishments
- regularly encouraging a child with his or her homework
- helping a child perceive him- or herself as a capable problem solver
- instilling a strong work ethic

The World Book surveys, and a later one by the Public Agenda Foundation, substantiated what the PTA had always known—that parents were not only concerned about how their children were doing in school but that they knew what kind of support best helped their children. Now what parents needed was authority to assume a central decision-making role in their children's schools. Yet, as decisions were being made about what to include on the list of National Edu-

Kathryn Whitfill, president, National PTA, 1993–1995 cation Goals—goals that, if approved, would most likely be adopted by school systems throughout the nation—parent involvement was not among them.

From the PTA's grass roots came a ground swell of letter writing and phone calls to governors and legislators asking, even demanding, that parent involvement be included as one of the National Education Goals. The voice of the PTA was heard. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, as signed by President Clinton, contained not six goals, as originally drafted, but eight, the eighth reading as follows:

> By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children.



The National PTA produced *Goals 2000: The Next Step Is Yours* to guide PTA members in facilitating family involvement by learning to develop policies, provide resources, and obtain grant monies.

Helping parent involvement initiatives take root

The National PTA considered the eighth National Education Goal a victory for students, parents, and educators. But the association realized from the start that it's one thing to make parent involvement a goal; it's quite another to make it successful. Parents, schools, and even teacher education programs would need guidance to get started. The National PTA began by designing *Parent Plus: A Comprehensive Program for Parent Involvement* to orient parents, educators, and community leaders to the purpose, benefits, and steps for strengthening parents' involvement in education and the community.

GOALS 2000

Goal One: All children in America will start school ready to learn.

Goal Two: The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Goal Three: All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.

Goal Four: The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.

Goal Five: U.S. students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

Goal Six: Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Goal Seven: Every school in America will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Goal Eight: Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

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Next the association entered into a partnership with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to promote the training of educators in parent involvement strategies through preservice and in-service teacher education programs. The state PTA congresses of Alaska, Alabama, California, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania were matched with universities in their respective states to establish parent involvement curricula and coordinate successful practices for parent involvement training.

Another new program called Continuity for Success paired the efforts of the National PTA with the National Head Start Association in encouraging parents to stay involved as their children make the transition from preschool programs into public elementary schools. In the pilot sites of Rochester, New York; Charlotte, North Carolina; and El Paso, Texas, a Head Start program and a local PTA joined together to assess the needs and strengths of parent involvement in their communities. Following an initial assessment, the sites planned activities for the following school year that would build on the strengths and begin to eliminate the barriers to parents staying involved.

To introduce school communities to the concept of parent involvement—its purpose, benefits, and implementation—the PTA produced a family of *Parent Plus* materials, including a teacher's guide (not shown).

New aspects to leadership development

The renewed emphasis on leadership development of recent administrations expanded in scope in 1994 when the first Leadership/Legislative Advocacy Program was conducted prior to the annual legislative conference in Washington, DC. The program offered leadership training specifically for the legislative arena, with a focus on advocacy skills.

Certain state PTAs had a difficult time developing leaders from among their members because they did not have the resources to put together skill development programs. The National PTA's region vice presidents responded to this need by gleaning the best materials from states that did have leadership development resources. Together the region vice presidents created the Leadership Skills Manual, a training course adaptable by any state for training members in basic leadership skills. This new manual was first used for a train-the-trainer workshop series conducted prior to the opening of the 1995 annual national convention.

In 1993, the National PTA headquarters was moved from its longtime home of 700 N. Rush Street to the IBM Building on Wabash Avenue, in Chicago. This move made possible technological improvements that would enable staff to provide more support to volunteers.

Safeguarding
YOUR
Children

Safeguarding our children

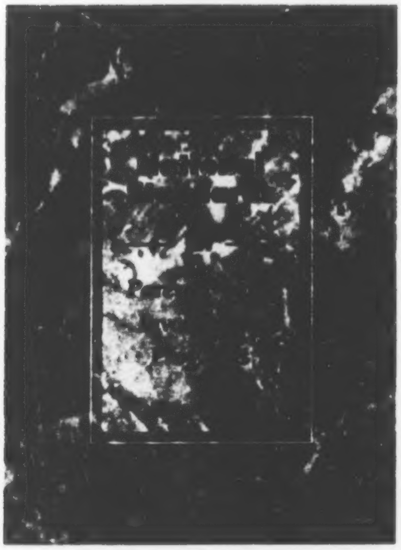
Parents not only turned to the National PTA seeking direction on educational matters, but also seeking help in keeping their children safe. They asked for information on how to prevent violence and protect their children from harmful influences. The National PTA, through the assistance of the Allstate Foundation, researched and developed the booklet *Safeguarding Your Children* to provide parents with information about such matters as managing family conflict, raising drug-free children, coping with school bullies, avoiding gang influence, and building safe communities, to name a few. The booklet was promoted nationally with the assistance of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and National PTA Honorary Chair Linda Ellerbee. Parents and educators expressed sincere appreciation for the guidance this booklet had to offer.

An air of anticipation

Joan M. Dykstra, president, National PTA, 1995–1997

When officers were elected at the 1995 annual convention in Orlando, Florida, delegates were casting their last votes for a president and their first votes for a *president-elect.* Previously, the association had elected a *first vice president* who would serve for two years at the president's "right hand," but only move into the presidency *if elected.* Now, through bylaw changes, the National PTA had provided for continuity in the transition of national officers. The delegation selected Joan M. Dykstra of Maryland as the last elected National PTA president, and Lois Jean White of Tennessee as the first president-elect.

With the 100th anniversary in sight, the association put renewed effort behind its labors for children. It became charged with the energy to blaze new trails and celebrate its history and accomplishments. The months leading up to the centennial celebration did not disappoint (see "Celebrating a Century of Commitment to Children," p. 162).

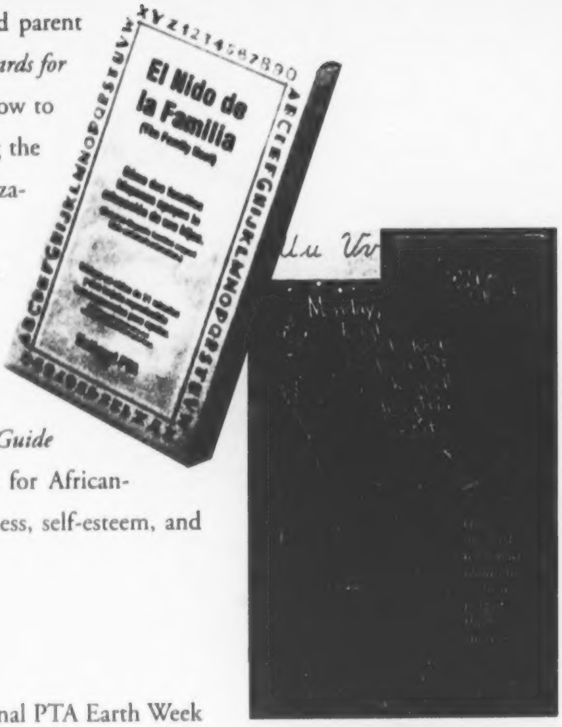


Nurturing parent involvement

With parent involvement now an official goal of the Educate America Act, the National PTA began developing standards for schools to apply when working with parents. Based on research of its own and that of other respected child development and education organizations, the National PTA devised six standards critical to developing a parent involvement program:

- Regular two-way, meaningful communication between home and school
- Promotion and support of parenting skills
- Active parent participation in student learning
- Parents as welcome volunteer partners in schools
- Parents as full partners in school decisions that affect children and families
- Outreach to the community for resources to strengthen schools

These six standards—endorsed by more than 30 national education and parent involvement associations—were outlined in the handbook *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs.* The booklet included examples of how to create an effective parent involvement program and means for measuring the success of such an effort. Popular demand from schools and parent organizations kept printing presses busy.

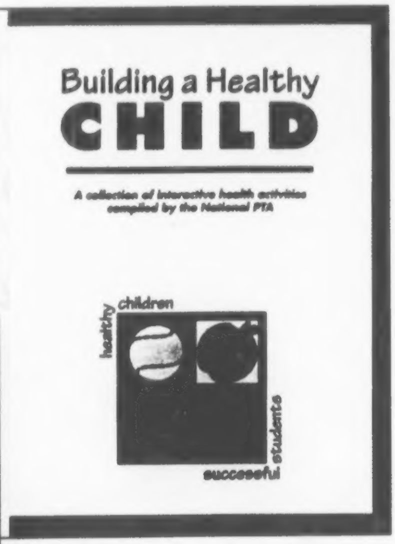


Recognizing how important it is to encourage parent involvement among diverse groups, the National PTA worked with JCPenney, ASPIRA, and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund to produce the Spanish-language video *El Nido de la Familia*—in English, *The Family Nest.* A related project called the *Ebony/National PTA Guide to Student Excellence* was designed with video program and guidebook for African-American parents to help their children develop greater academic readiness, self-esteem, and ethnic pride.

Building a healthy environment

Environmental education efforts once promoted during the annual National PTA Earth Week observance were expanded into a year-round program through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The National PTA worked closely with state branches to develop a network of state-level environmental education leaders prepared to provide resources and offer training to local and council PTA leaders. Training conferences were conducted annually to prepare these state leaders for their roles, and they were encouraged to apply for PTA grants to conduct an environmental program or project. New communication tools included the quarterly newsletter *Our World,* the *National PTA Leader's Guide to Environmental Issues,* and a *National PTA Earth Week* brochure packed with activity ideas for the observance.

Late-century research identified the need to reach children at younger ages with the facts about human reproduction and related issues such as HIV prevention. Comprehensive school health programs increased in favor among child-focused education and health organizations for their proven effectiveness in teaching children about healthful lifelong habits. The National PTA, a long-time advocate of establishing comprehensive health programs in schools, published a collection of interactive health activities in a booklet called *Building a Healthy Child,* to provide parents and teachers with ideas on how to introduce health facts through fun and games.


Building a Healthy
CHILD
A collection of interactive health activities compiled by the National PTA
healthy
children
successful
students

ld, Our Children •
r Future

Historically, the National PTA has been a respected voice for children, youth, and families among law and policy makers in the nation's capital. (At right) U.S. President Bill Clinton and National PTA President Joan Dykstra exchange a warm greeting. (Below) Joan Dykstra and Shirley Igo, vice president for legislation, pause in front of the Capitol Building where both have put in many hours speaking before legislators.

Old battles, new strategies

Early in her administration, Joan Dykstra was invited to meet with President Clinton and Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala to discuss the PTA's concern over tobacco advertising aimed at children. The National PTA had reason to take heart when, in 1997, the Federal Trade Commission finally established grounds to charge a major tobacco company with illegally targeting minors with its advertising campaign. This action followed a debilitating blow to the tobacco industry when one of its smaller cigarette manufacturers admitted knowing full well of scientific data proving the harmful, addictive effects of cigarettes. The industry's long-standing denial of knowledge of any scientific evidence regarding the health-damaging properties of tobacco crumbled with this admission, opening a door for the FTC to level its charges and for the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco as a drug.

Parents gained a new electronic companion for television monitoring when the U.S. Congress passed the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which carried an amendment for installation of the V-chip in new televisions. Labeled "V"-chip because it would allow adults to prevent *violent* programs from airing on televisions in their home, the chip could also be used to block other programs containing material inappropriate for children (see "Monitoring the Media and the Message," p. 96).

In Dallas, in the fall of 1994, the National PTA, in partnership with the National Cable Television Association and Cable in the Classroom, launched a large-scale critical viewing workshop project called Taking Charge of Your TV. The workshops were designed to teach parents how to help their children become discriminating in the quality of programs they viewed. The tremendous popularity of these workshops took volunteer trainers from the three organizations to hundreds of communities across the country.

Sharing the concerns of a first lady

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton asked the National PTA to join her and other advocates at a nationally televised press conference in the summer of 1995, to appeal to the federal government for continuing financial support of public television. With that, Joan Dykstra joined the First Lady's conference panel to speak about the valuable and unique contribution public television has made in family viewing, especially in the area of quality children's programming.

Discovering their thinking to be in line on numerous topics, the National PTA and Mrs. Clinton worked together in other areas as well, with the First Lady lending her voice in support of several PTA initiatives, including the critical viewing workshop project called Taking Charge of Your TV, and the parents' guide to violence prevention, *Safeguarding Your Children.*

Our Children
VIOLENCE:

New means of outreach

Near the close of its first 100 years, the National PTA has climbed both new and familiar hills, both figuratively and literally, to expand its outreach.

After a 20-year run accented with honors and awards, *PTA Today* was gracefully retired and its successor—*Our Children*—introduced in September 1995. The plan, initiated during Kathryn Whitfill's administration, to make the magazine more "parent friendly," resulted in a new publication with a crisp, four-color design complemented by briefer feature stories and new sections emphasizing quick bits of information, plus a first-person column written by educators allowing readers to contribute to the editorial mix. As early as its second year the new publication, won awards and drew praise from members and subscribers alike.

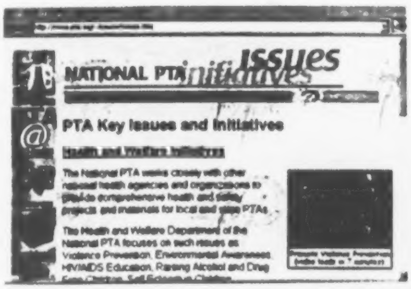
At the annual legislative conference in March 1996, and later that year at the 100th annual national convention in June, PTA members from all over the world gathered on Capitol Hill to rally for children. Following each rally, the assembled advocates dispersed to discuss with their respective legislators the importance of giving children top consideration in all legislative matters.

And finally, in preparation for its second century, the National PTA took the steps to secure faster information exchange among its leaders and members, and created an engaging tool for reaching a wider audience. The wheels were set in motion when the association was approached by Microsoft Corporation to become one of the "charter members" of its new Microsoft Network (MSN). The National PTA recognized that establishing a site on the Internet meant a new means for more people to learn about the PTA. The MSN site was just a first step into the world of telecommunications. The association subsequently built a network among its board members and state offices and created its own World Wide Web site—Children First—at www.pta.org. With these tools of technology in place, the PTA could now quickly reach and rally its members, share the PTA story and resources, and inspire more and diverse populations to respond to the unflagging call to action for children.

National PTA Supports Public Education

Above: While meeting with their representatives on Capitol Hill, in 1996, PTA members handed out brochures that emphasized the need to support public education.

Below: Within its first 18 months of existence, the PTA Web site drew more than 1 million visitors who browsed and downloaded its award-winning contents.



PTA Key Issues and Initiatives

Health and Welfare Initiatives

The National PTA works closely with other national health agencies and organizations to provide comprehensive health and safety projects and materials for local and state PTAs.

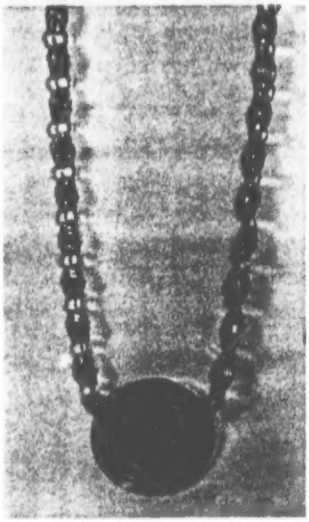
The Health and Welfare Department of the National PTA focuses on such issues as Violence Prevention, Environmental Awareness, HIV/AIDS Education, Raising Alcohol and Drug

Children First

Right: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is joined by President Joan Dykstra (center) and President-Elect Lois Jean White (right) after speaking at a general assembly during the National PTA's 100th Annual Convention, in Washington, DC.

Below: On the steps of the Capitol Building, PTA members exhibit their spirit and enthusiasm as they rally to make children's issues *the* top legislative priority.

Right: This gold necklace was presented to President Joan Dykstra by the National PTA Board of Directors in June 1996, at the 100th Annual National Convention, in Washington, DC. The chain was designed as 53 pairs of clasped hands, representing the 53 state congresses that belong to the National PTA. The medallion carries the 100th anniversary logo.



A continuing challenge

As Joan Dykstra addressed the assembled delegates at the National PTA's 100th annual convention, she focused for a few moments on the strides made by the association on behalf of children's welfare. Then she turned the assembly's attention to the tasks left to be done through the following words:

> Here then is our challenge:
>
> To incorporate the diverse population into the spectrum of opportunity that PTA represents. To make ourselves accessible to parents facing hurdles to involvement, whether through poverty, single-parenthood, time constraints, or language and cultural barriers. To move beyond the schoolhouse into the community, attracting partners in government, business, and the media. To reweave the fabric of American society so that children are not lost between the cracks. To continue the mission Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst identified a century ago.
>
> If we achieve all of that, the 21st century will not think of us as fund-raisers but policy makers, not cookie bakers but action takers, not mildly apathetic but wildly energetic and, my friends, we will be a force to be reckoned with.

A new century

Lois Jean White, president, National PTA, 1997–1999

As Lois Jean White took office in June 1997, she made history in many ways. She was the first president-elect in PTA's history, assuming the presidency after two years of holding that position during Joan Dykstra's administration. She became the first National PTA president to serve a full term in the association's second century. And she became the first African-American president of the National PTA. More than a quarter-century after the merging of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and the National PTA, she became a living emblem of the organization's commitment to celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion.

Shortly before becoming president, she traveled with then-President Dykstra to participate in the historic Presidents' Summit for America's Future, which was held in Philadelphia in April of 1997. Serving as General Chairman of the summit was retired General Colin Powell, while Presidents Clinton and Bush served as honorary cochairs. The goals of the summit were to mobilize millions of citizens and thousands of organizations to participate more extensively in volunteer work, in order to provide greater opportunities in life to all of America's young people. The National PTA eagerly committed itself to promoting those worthwhile aims, which had already been such a vital part of its mission for the past 100 years.

When Lois Jean White assumed the presidency at the 101st national convention in Kansas City, she made it clear that there was no room in the PTA's second century for resting on the organization's laurels. In her inauguration speech, she sketched out her vision of where the PTA was headed, challenging her assembled fellow members to carry the PTA's message forward to those who needed their help the most:

> Reaching out to all children. That is what we're supposed to be doing. It is one of our founding principles. But consider for a moment. Are we really achieving our goal? Are we reaching the people who need us most? The ones who feel most disenfranchised by this society? Who not only aren't being asked to the table, but who may not even be aware they have something of value to contribute—that their voices matter and their opinions count?
>
> Those are the people we need to be concerned about. Far too many parents, I fear, aren't part of our organization because they simply don't know enough about us. They haven't heard about all that PTA is and does. They can't imagine it because they haven't been exposed to it. And that's our own fault.
>
> I suspect we've grown complacent over the years because with decades of success to our credit, we've come to think there will "always" be a PTA. If that's your idea, it's time to change it.

So the National PTA's next century began—with words of challenge, reminding the organization's members of a message that harks back to the theme Alice McLellan Birney selected for the very first convention: "All children are our children."

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

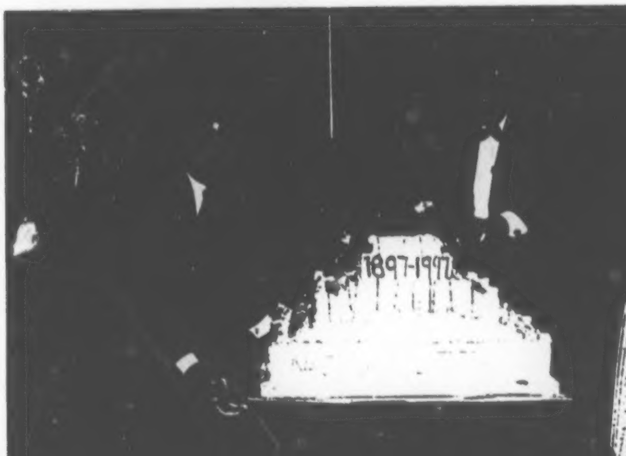
Excitement surrounding the National PTA's 100th anniversary was already building two years ahead of schedule, when local PTA presidents received their personal copies of the 100th Anniversary Planner. First mailed in the spring of 1995, the planner was filled with ideas and a two-year calendar of activities local PTAs could use to build enthusiasm for the upcoming celebration.

At the same time, a 100th anniversary videotape was produced for PTA members to use as a promotional tool about the association. Everyone who attended the 1995 national convention was given a free copy to take home.

100th Annivers
PLANNE

With the help of the planner and the video, members were encouraged to spread the word about PTA's century of achievements and to use the anniversary as an occasion to increase their visibility in the community.

In June of 1996, for its 100th annual national meeting, the National PTA returned to its birthplace—Washington, DC. Here attendees enjoyed special birthday events during the run of the convention, with entertainment by children's choirs, marching bands, and comedy troupes. One day attendees were swept off to Capitol Hill for a rally on the steps and a chance to renew their commitment to children for the next 100 years. A new, limited-edition 100th anniversary logo was unveiled, and every state received artwork to produce anniversary stationery, signs, buttons, and stickers. A catalog of one-of-a-kind 100th anniversary gifts was made available to members. In a special convention ceremony sponsored by American Greetings, representatives from each state congress placed a "homemade" plaque on a giant birthday card to commemorate the year it joined the association. Distinguished guests at the convention included First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of Education Richard Riley, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, television producer Linda Ellerbee, host of the PBS program *The New Explorers*, Bill Kurtis, and singer Maureen McGovern.



Above: With celebration in full swing, a large birthday cake—complete with sparklers—is wheeled in.

Right: Fifty-six unique panels—one made by each of the 53 state congresses, American Greetings, and the National PTA, plus a presidential seal from the White House—were placed on a gigantic American Greetings-sponsored "birthday" card. A brief history was related for each state as its panel was attached.

The party and the rally were captured on videotape to be included in *Voices of the PTA*. This video was created to remember the contributions of PTA's founders and to share the voices of today's PTA members, who are equally dedicated to the cause. The video, along with a leader's guide for presentation, were shipped to all incoming PTA presidents in the fall of 1996 as yet another tool to raise public awareness of PTA at local meetings in the community.

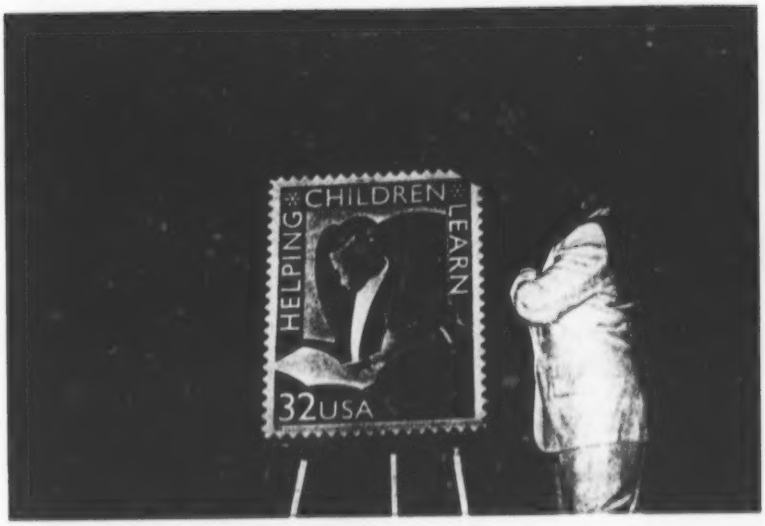
Many state congresses took advantage of their fall conventions to begin celebrating in earnest. Some members arrived in turn-of-the-century outfits. Other conventions boasted special displays, and several even created museum exhibits featuring memorabilia collected from PTA archives. Children were invited to perform at many gatherings and families attended conventions together. Many PTAs sent special notices to their state legislators and quite a few received special congratulatory proclamations from their governors or other leaders.

On New Year's Day, the National PTA sponsored a float in the Tournament of Roses Parade. Built on the theme, "The Field Trip," the float carried National PTA President Joan Dykstra, California PTA President Carol Ruley, 1997 Hearst Outstanding Educator award-winner Marlene Melvin, and a group of lucky schoolchildren over the parade's route through suburban Los Angeles. PTA members from throughout California and across the country had participated in the float's construction, and their contributions resulted in the PTA winning the prestigious Sweepstakes Trophy, awarded to the most beautiful float.

Top: Third graders from Louisiana celebrated the 100th anniversary by performing "The First 100 Years of PTA."

Bottom: Mr. Aaron Paragoso and the Manana Elementary Chorus entertained the Hawaii State PTA.

How do you make a Sweepstakes Trophy-winning Tournament of Roses Parade float? With 1,132 PTA volunteers—young and old, from Maryland to Illinois to Kansas to 11 districts in California—affixing tens of thousands of orchids and other exotic flowers, plus apricots, acorn squashes, limes, kumquats, oatmeal, rice, seaweed, onion seed, and dried peas with special glues to tight and towering spaces on the fragile frames of dinosaurs. PTA volunteers clocked 1,340 8-hour shifts. And what would these volunteers do when they finished their work ahead of schedule? Why, they would go help other organizations build their floats, of course! *(Los Angeles Times* photo.)



LeGree Daniels of the United States Postal Service board of governors debuts a special new postage stamp honoring the National PTA before PTA President Joan Dykstra and gala attendees.

CNN news anchor Bernard Shaw hosted the evening's festivities. Here he introduces 1996 Reflections award recipient Andrea Novak, who read her story, "Open Your Eyes and See the Beauty in a Seed."

February 17, 1997, the official centennial anniversary date, finally arrived and with it came the most exciting celebration of all—the 100th Anniversary Gala. The Lisner Auditorium on the campus of George Washington University in Washington, DC, was the setting for a spectacular evening. The PTA invited its friends and partners from business, government, and education to a black-tie reception. Then guests were ushered into the auditorium for an evening of entertainment hosted by CNN correspondent Bernard Shaw. Children's choirs were interspersed among performances by singer Rita Moreno and beloved comedian Bill Cosby. A multicolored laser show closed the festivities.

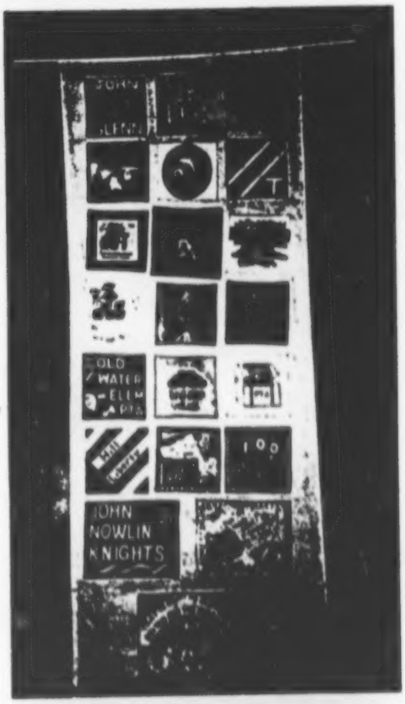
Honored at the gala were these descendants of PTA founder Alice McLellan Birney, who started it all 100 years ago: Jodie Demere-Clements (left), Amy and Jessica Clements (center), and Margaret Birney-Crawford (right).

The featured performer at the 100th anniversary gala was America's legendary favorite father, Bill Cosby.

Award-winning actor-singer-dancer Rita Moreno entertained the crowd with her glamorous cabaret act.

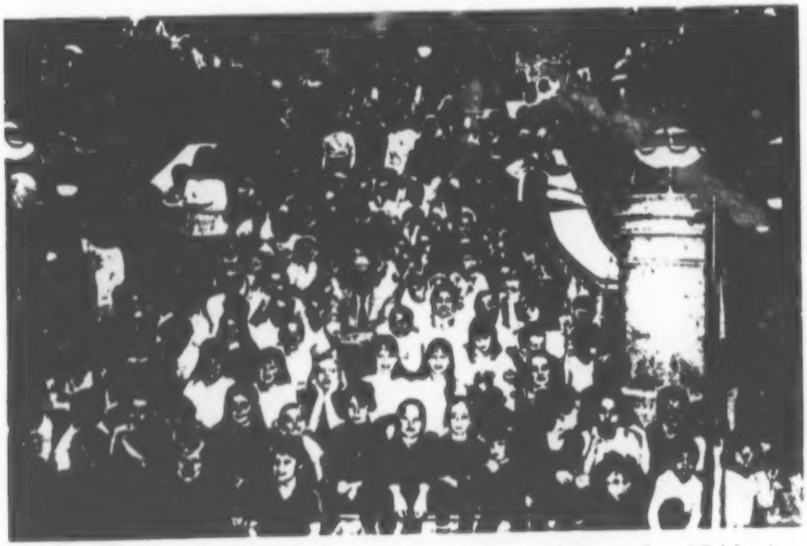
Left: Alabama PTA members and friends enjoyed watching the National PTA's gala via satellite.

Below: One of five quilt block panels submitted by local units in Missouri to commemorate PTA's 100th anniversary.



Most significant of all, every state PTA had the opportunity to tune in live to the gala. A very generous contribution of time and technology by the National Cable Television Association made it possible to downlink a live satellite broadcast of the show to the sites of state PTA celebrations. Many of the 53 congresses chose to host their own galas at the same time as the national program. For the first time in the history of the organization, national, state, and local PTA members were able to come together to celebrate all the many decades of PTA effort and PTA success.

And finally, to preserve in time this momentous occasion, the National and state PTAs contributed items for enclosure in a time capsule. The capsule will remain undisturbed until the bicentennial celebration in 2097, when PTA members will break the seal for a glimpse at their remarkable history.



From across the state of Utah, 350 children came to the state capital to perform "Celebrating a Century of Commitment," a musical tribute to the PTA. This presentation was just part of the day-long anniversary open house held in the Utah State Capitol Rotunda.

CELEBRATING
CHILDREN
a century of commitment

From an exquisite ice sculpture in Oklahoma (middle) to a festive cake sporting the 100th anniversary logo in West Virginia (bottom). PTAs across the country added unique touches to make their gala events memorable.

Epilogue

One hundred years is an achievement few people attain in life. It is similarly rare for institutions. In his 1948 work *Civilization on Trial*, historian Arnold Toynbee offered this compelling explanation why:

> Civilizations, I believe, come to birth and proceed to grow by successfully responding to successive challenges. They break down and go to pieces if and when a challenge confronts them which they fail to meet.

That reasoning is equally apt for institutions. The National Congress of Mothers. The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The National PTA. By whatever name it has been known, this organization was created long ago to meet a profound challenge: to better the lives of children. And today, 100 years later, it continues to flourish because of its ability to meet every new challenge that a chaotic, sometimes harsh, always unpredictable century has thrown at it.

Each decade brought new demands. But the PTA's flexibility allowed it to bring to bear whatever tools were at hand to address the problem. The PTA has never lost sight of its transcendent goal: to change the lives of children across the nation and around the world for the better.

Opposite page: "It Could Happen that Peace Could Grow from Within Us All"—a hope for the future expressed by 1997 Reflections winner Amber Welsh through her original visual art composition.

Better because of free libraries and textbooks. Kindergartens and improved curricula. Safer schools and school buses. Improved children's health standards and greater parental involvement. A concern for the whole child and the rights of that child.

In each of these arenas—and many more—the National PTA has made a profound difference, a difference attributable to the millions of parents and teachers who have sought nothing less than a better world for children. Because of their 100 years of dedication and determination, the world has been a better place for countless children.

But if PTA members everywhere take time now to appreciate the accomplishments of the past, it certainly is not because they consider their job done. If history has taught us anything, it is that the only thing the PTA can count on is the unexpected.

The PTA's first century serves as prologue to the challenges of the future. The next ten decades will be no less critical. The National PTA will be no less vigilant.

> May the whisper grow into a mighty shout throughout the land until all mankind takes it up as the battle cry for the closing years of the century. Let mothers, fathers, nurses, educators, ministers, legislators, and mightiest of all in its swift, far-reaching influence, the press, make the child the watchword and ward of the day and hour; let all else be secondary, and coming generations will behold a new world and a new people.
>
> —Alice McLellan Birney

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
PTA
·1897·

Continued from front flap.

of Mothers, irrespective of creed, color, or condition, stands for all parenthood, childhood, homehood. Its platform is the universe; its organization, the human race."

This commitment was also embraced by Selena Sloan Butler, who, with the support of the National PTA, founded the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1926. When the two organizations merged in 1970, so did their identical mission to improve the lives of children.

Within these pages you will read the inspirational chronicle of how the dreams of a few became a national movement—a force that has, for a century, touched the lives of millions of children. It's the story of visionary leadership and tireless workers.

The PTA Story—A Century of Commitment to Children profiles that story from the work of founders Birney, Hearst, and Butler on juvenile justice issues, kindergarten classes, and child labor laws, to hot lunch programs, automobile safety, and the salk Polio vaccine, down through to today's National Education Goals and the PTA Web site. Not just a story for ourselves, but one to share with anyone who makes a difference for children.

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